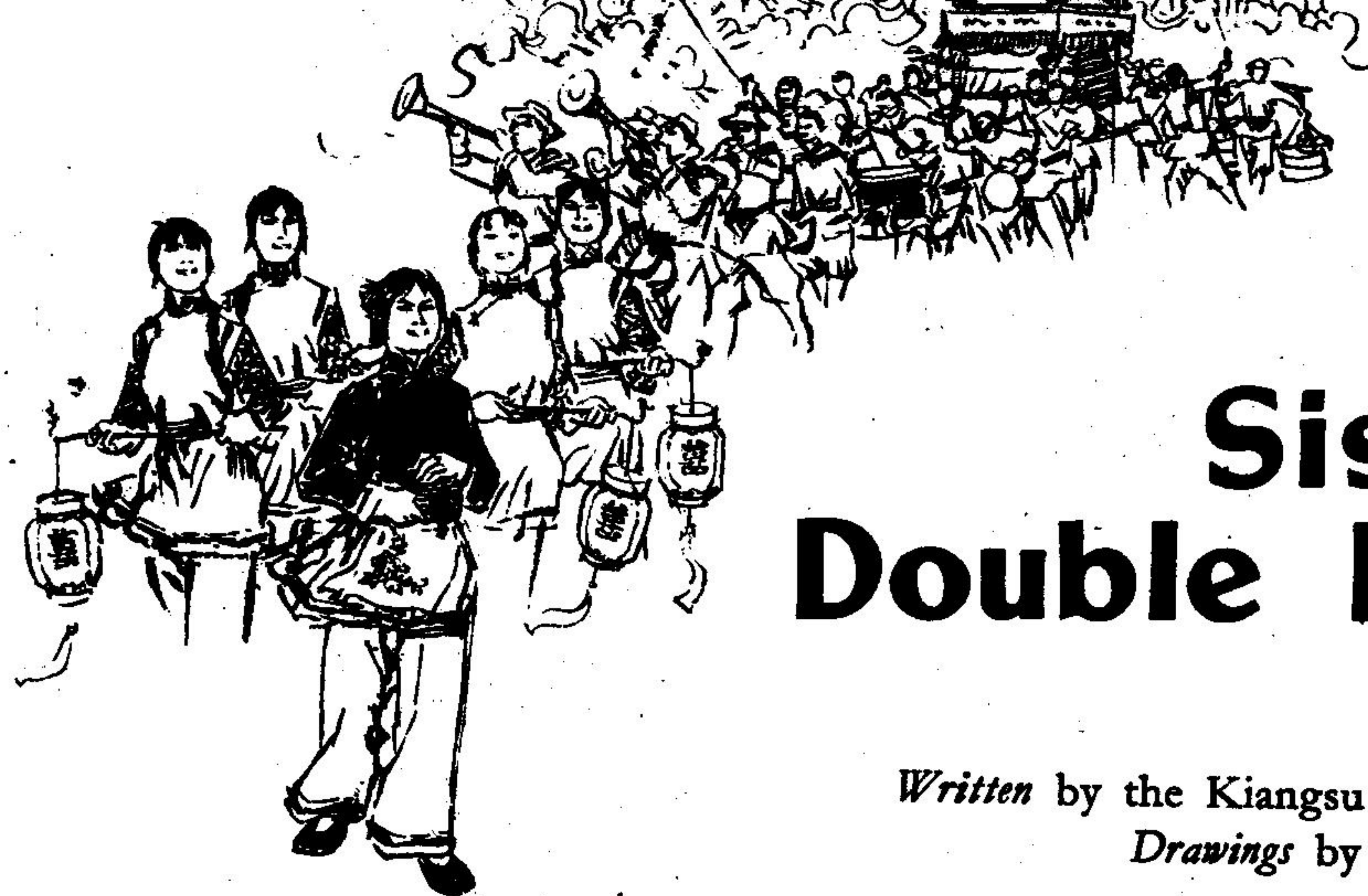




Sister Double Happiness



Sister Double Happiness

Written by the Kiangsu People's Publishing House
Drawings by Ku Tseng-ping

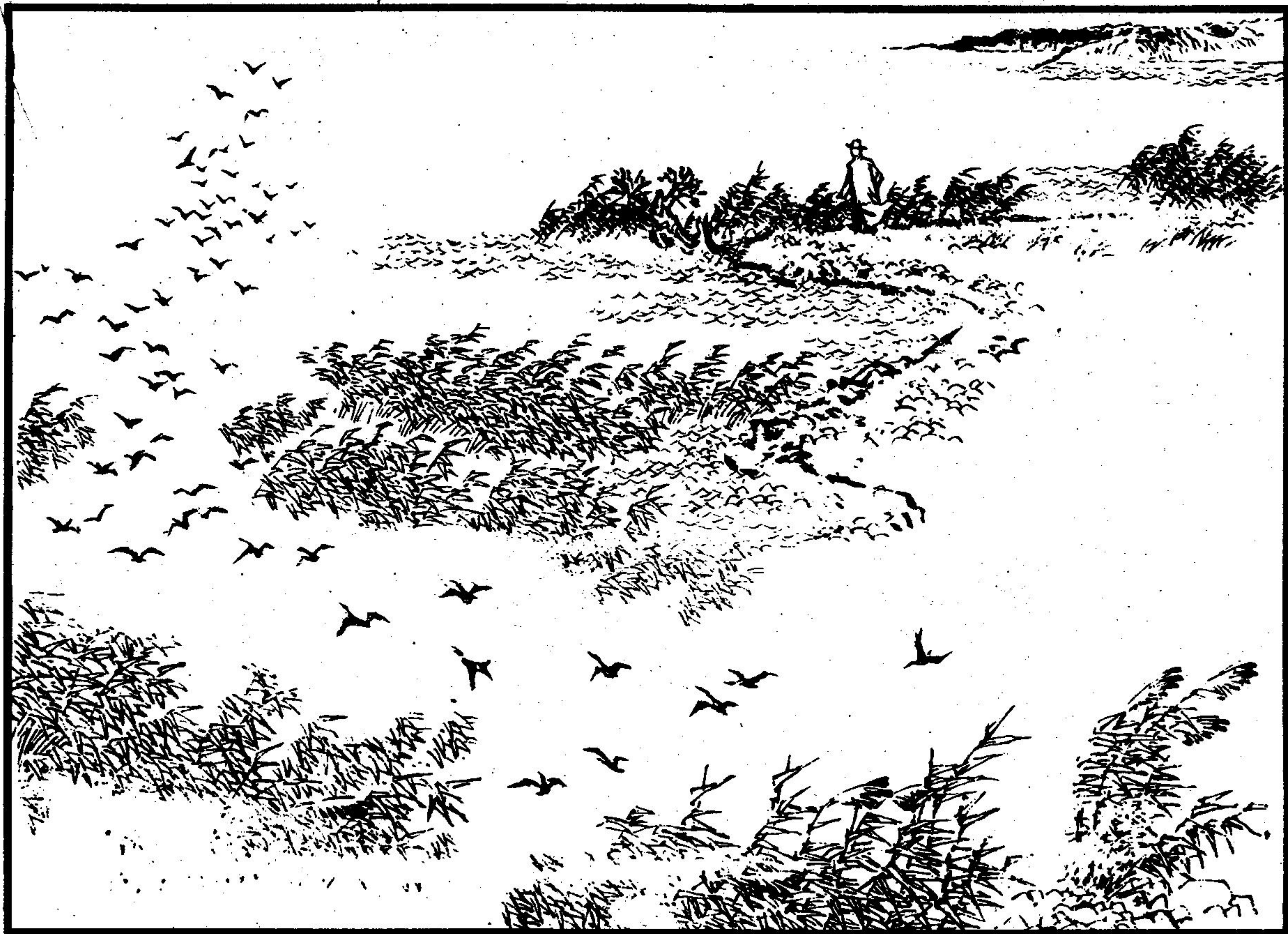
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Synopsis

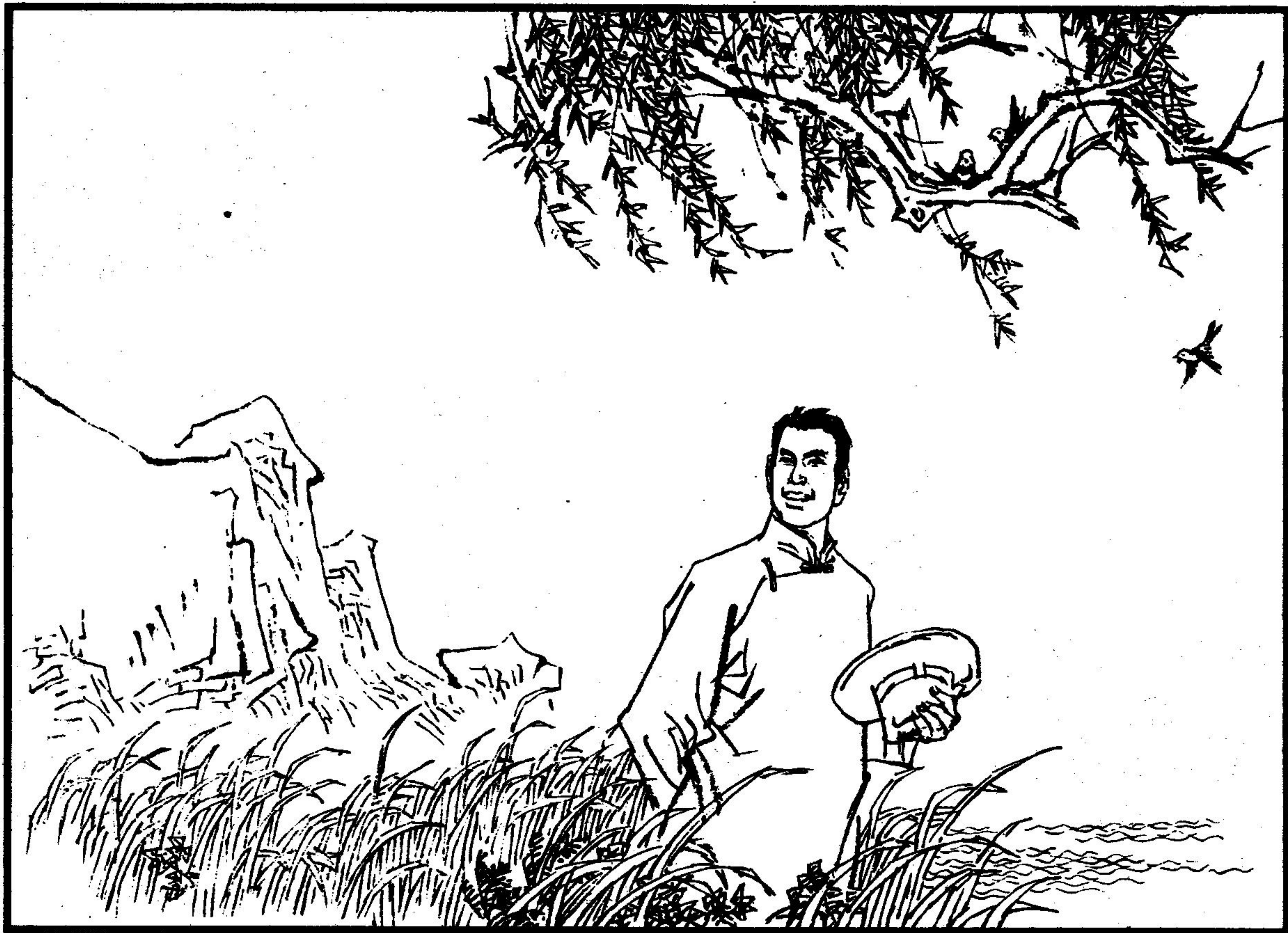
This story took place on the shores of Lake Taihu in Kiangsu Province during China's War of Resistance Against Japan. In order to complement Taihu's guerrilla unit and cut the enemy's communications and reinforcements, our East Islet militia detachment accepted the task of taking the enemy stronghold at Dragon Pool Bridge. Pretending to send out a bride, militia leader Sister Double Happiness and her comrades cleverly lured the enemy out of the stronghold and finished them off.



1. It happened late in the autumn of 1944. One day, when it was near dusk, Chin Ta-kang was on his way back from scouting the enemy's stronghold.



2. He was walking along the shore of Lake Taihu. Then from behind the tall grass jumped out a man holding a large wooden stick. He had bushy eyebrows and glaring eyes. He yelled: "Halt! What are you up to!"



3. As cool as a cucumber, Ta-kang took off his hat and laughed. "What," he said, "after only three days, you don't even recognize your comrade?"



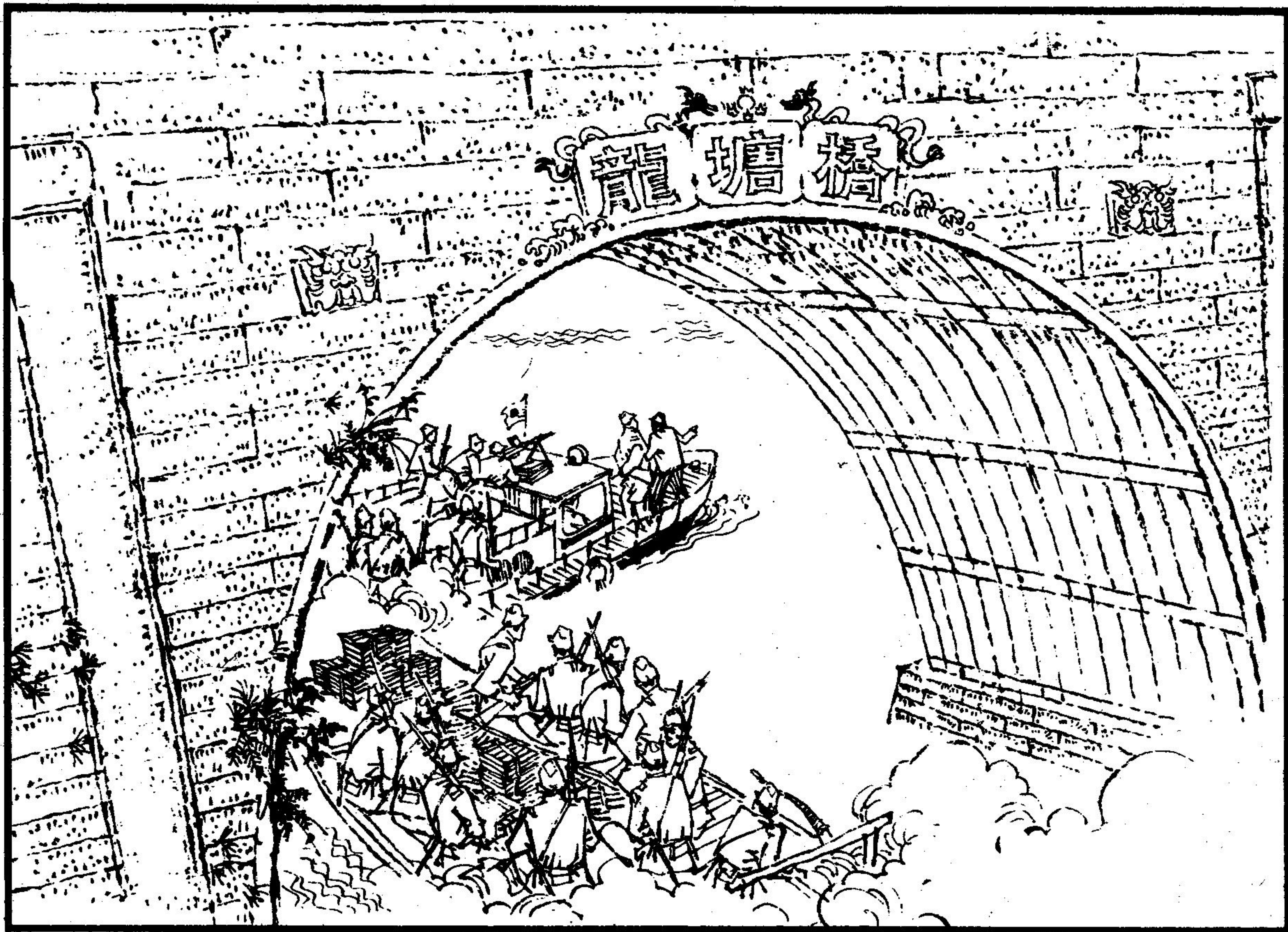
4. Chang Hei-niu, or Black Bull Chang as he was known, took a closer look. "Hell! It's you. And I thought you were an enemy agent." Then he gave a signal and a small boat shot out from the reeds beyond.



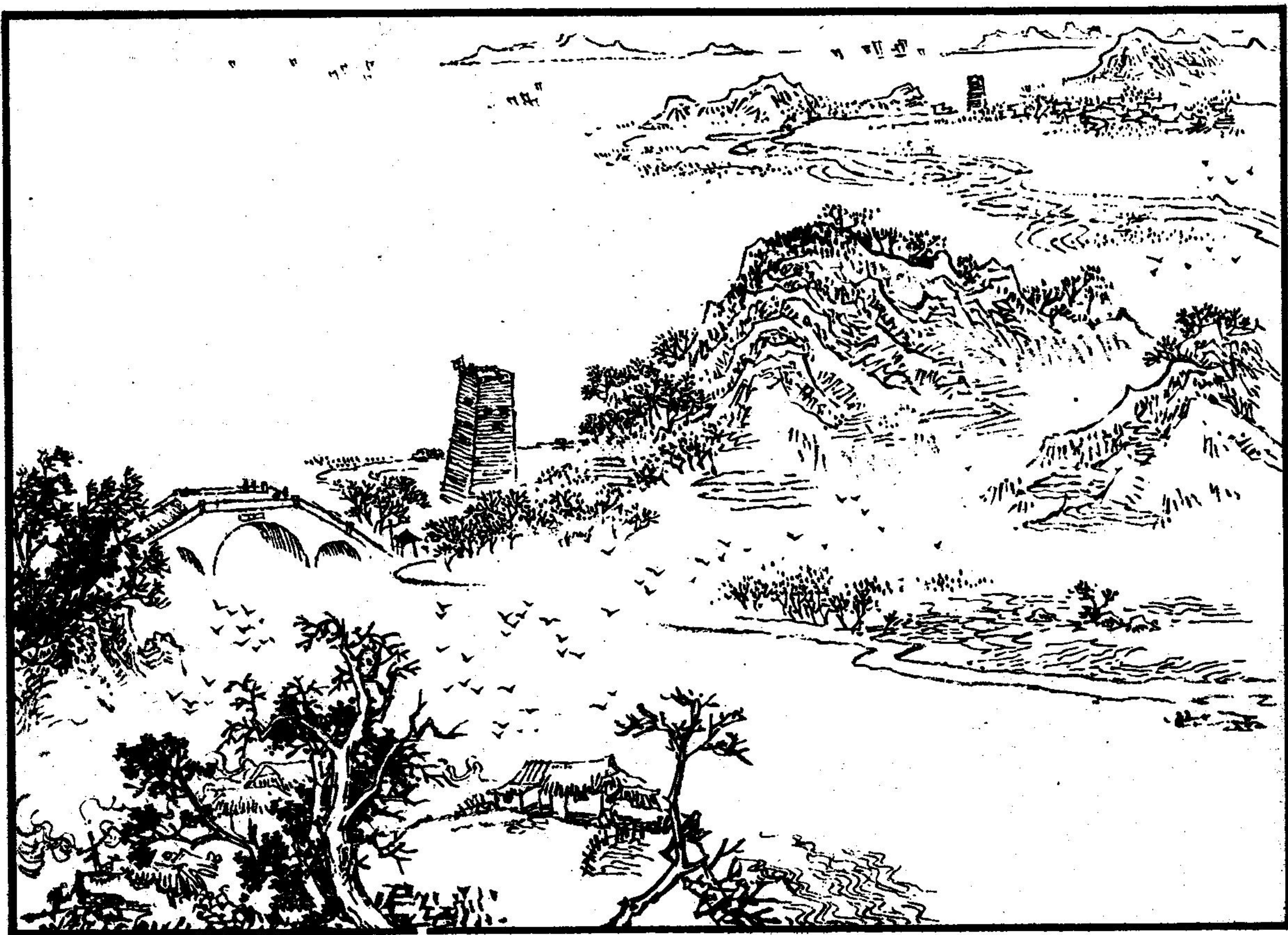
5. There were four militia cadres in it. They waved and said: "Hey, Ta-kang. You must have finished the task Sister Double Happiness assigned you."



6. Jumping aboard, he said: "After three looks at Dragon Pool Bridge, I got the low down on the enemy stronghold." They replied: "Sister Double Happiness has already gone to the guerrilla base. It looks like we're going to attack the Japanese stronghold pretty soon."



7. As it turned out, the Japanese aggressors entrenched in this area had suffered a series of body blows from the Taihu guerrillas and militia. They moved a unit of soldiers up from Soochow to reinforce the bridge stronghold.



8. The bridge, whose front looked over Lake Taihu and whose back gave onto a couple of towns, was an important traffic junction. The enemy had built their stronghold here, hoping that they would be able to have a tight control of the whole area.



9. The Japanese officer at Dragon Pool Bridge was short and fat with a small, pointed, bald head and a big beer-belly. Because of this the local people had given him the nickname of "Barrel."



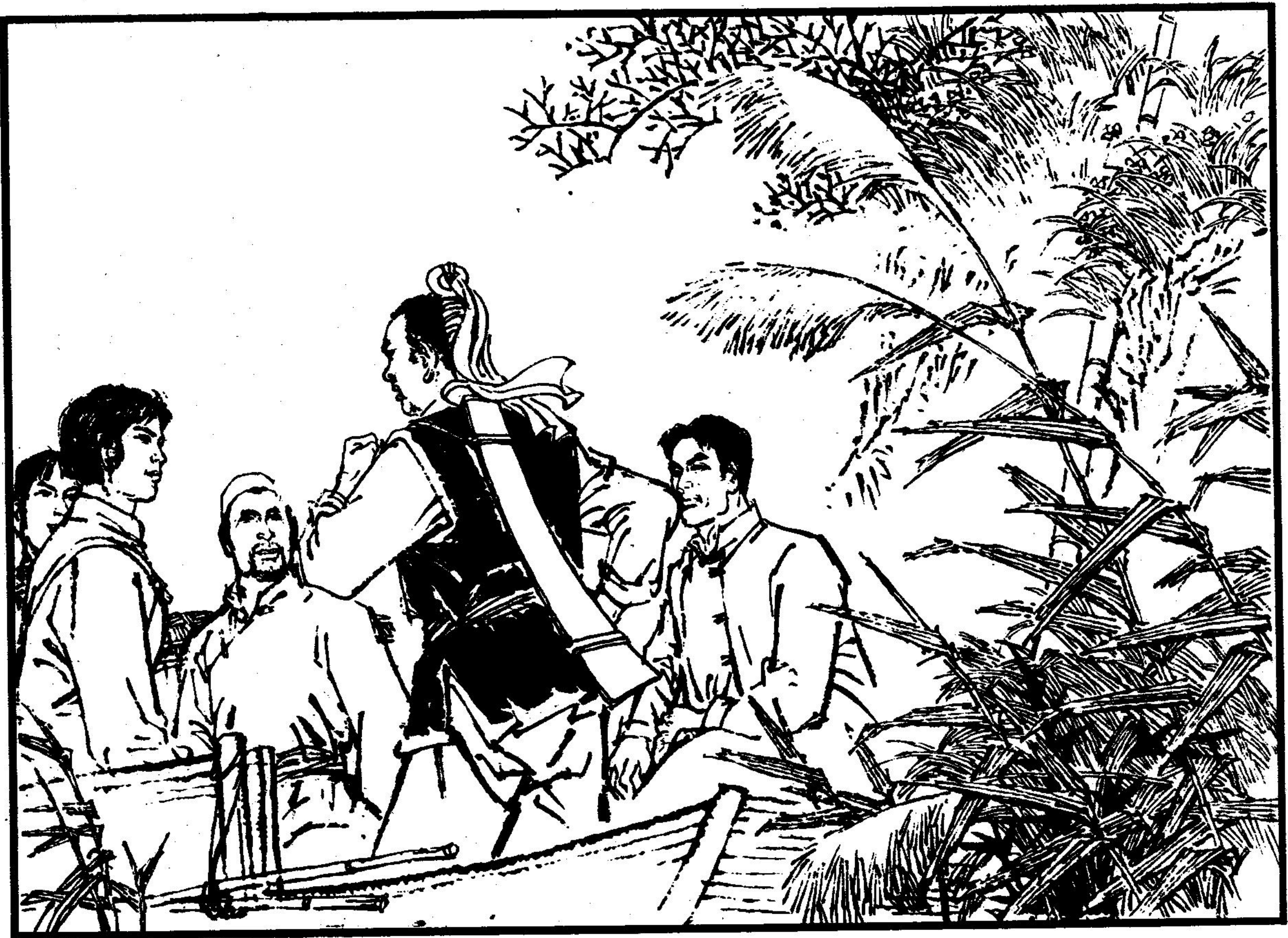
10. "Barrel" was a vicious brute, burning, killing and looting. For him, nothing was too evil. The Taihu guerrillas and militia had long ago pledged to rub out the stronghold and chop off his head.



11. Just when the militia were talking excitedly, Ta-kang suddenly yelled: "Look, who's coming!" Everyone looked up. It was the militia head Sister Double Happiness.



12. As she got on board, she said: "Comrades, our leaders have decided that, on the evening of the tenth, the Taihu guerrillas will eliminate the stronghold in Chinshih Town. In order to stop the enemy reinforcements, the leadership has ordered our militia to work in co-ordination with the guerrillas and wipe out this band led by 'Barrel.'"



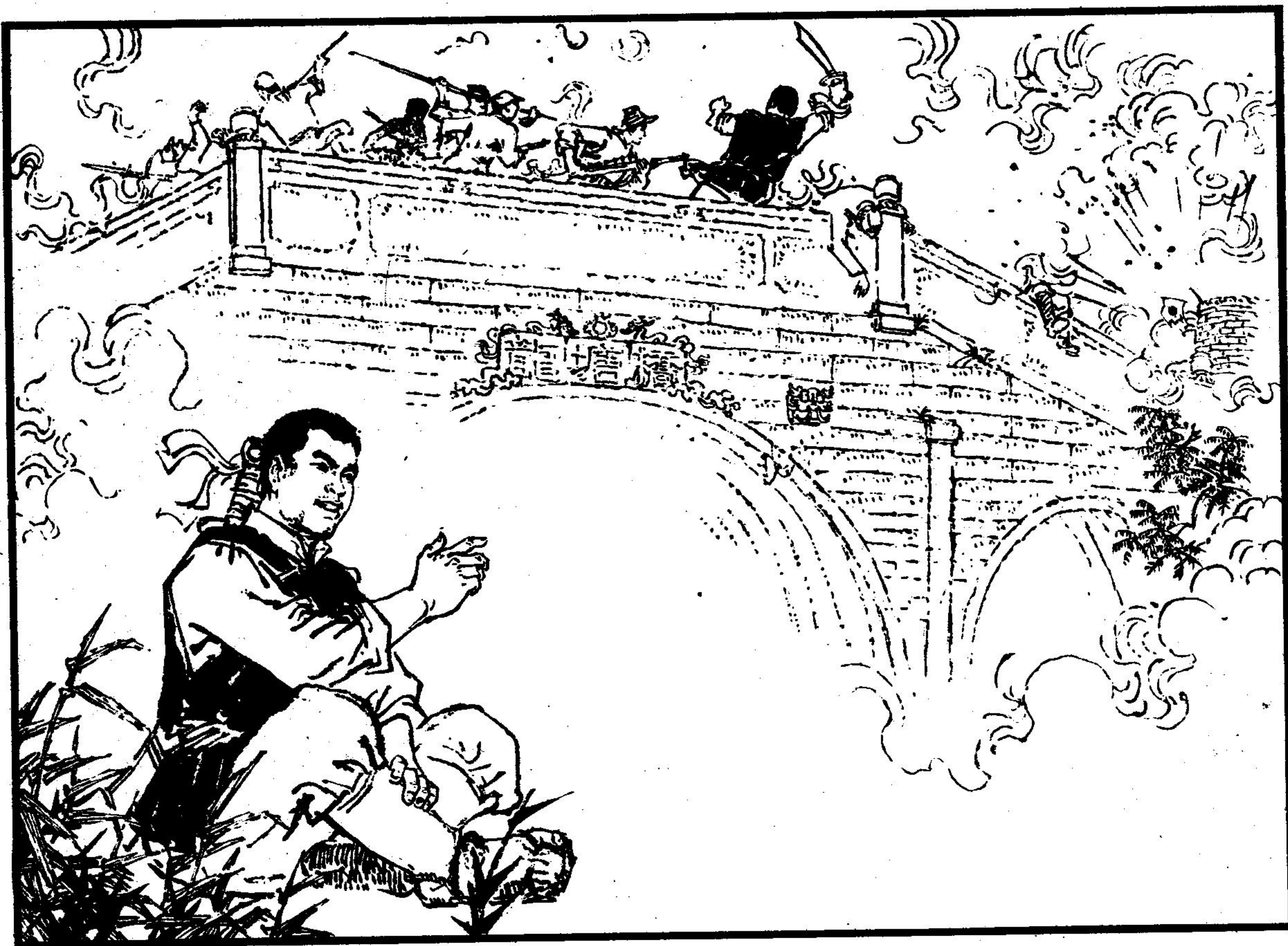
13. Black Bull thumped his chest and said: "Yes, I've been itching to have a go at it. As soon as you say the word, even if it costs me my life, I'm going to kill all those Japanese."



14. She said, smiling: "There you go again, being bull-headed. That is not the way. Now, Ta-kang, let's hear your report on the enemy stronghold."



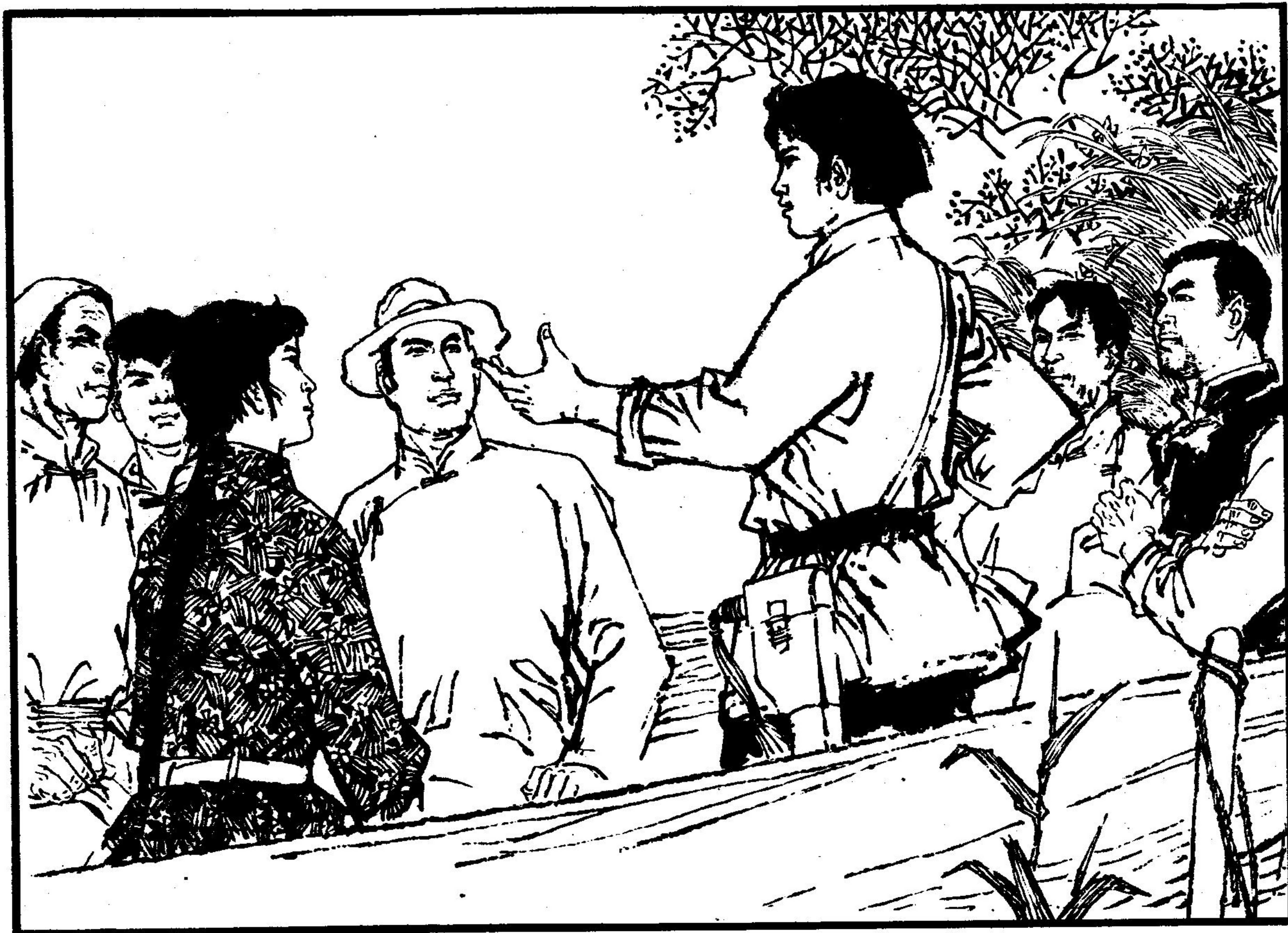
15. "There are fifteen Japanese at Dragon Pool Bridge, and one Chinese traitor who acts as their interpreter," said Ta-kang. "They have two machine-guns and ten rifles...."



16. Black Bull cut in: "When we begin the attack, everyone follow me and charge across the bridge. If we don't capture 'Barrel' alive, then my name isn't Black Bull."



17. Double Happiness shook her head and said: "But we can't do it recklessly, because the stronghold overlooks the bridge. It's so close to other enemy strongpoints that one shot would quickly bring enemy reinforcements. If we don't go about it the right way, we will bungle the whole operation."



18. Everyone listened closely. "The leadership has repeatedly reminded us that reckless attacks are disastrous," she continued. "We must use our heads to lure the enemy out and then finish them off."



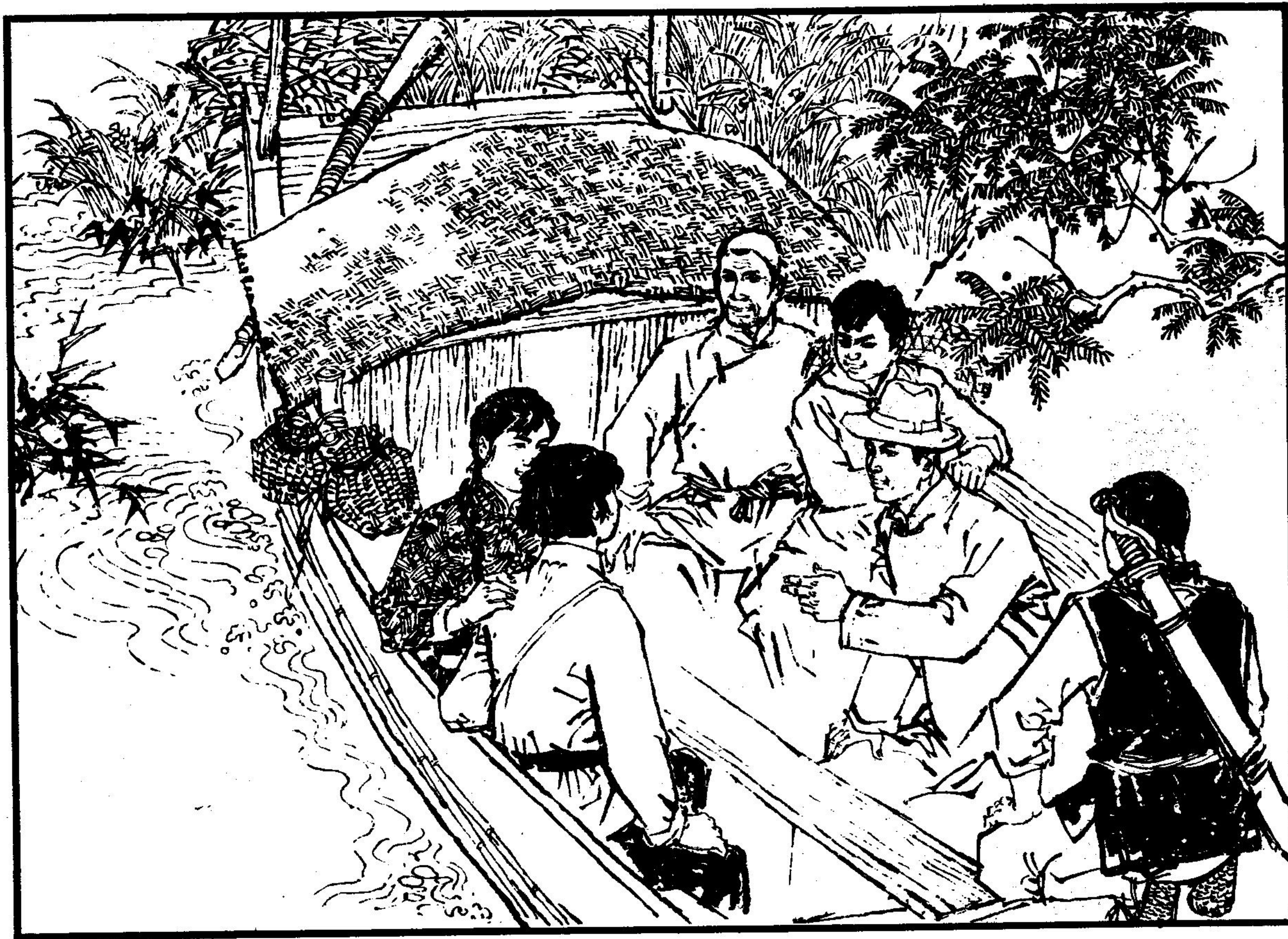
19. Everyone nodded in agreement. Black Bull, embarrassed, rubbed his stubbly chin and said: "Right, it's no good to be so impetuous. Underestimating the enemy is no good."



20. Then, Ta-kang told of "Barrel's" most recent crime: "Only the day before yesterday, he bayoneted a young woman who refused to be raped." This made the comrades even angrier. They pledged to wipe out the enemy and avenge their class brothers and sisters.



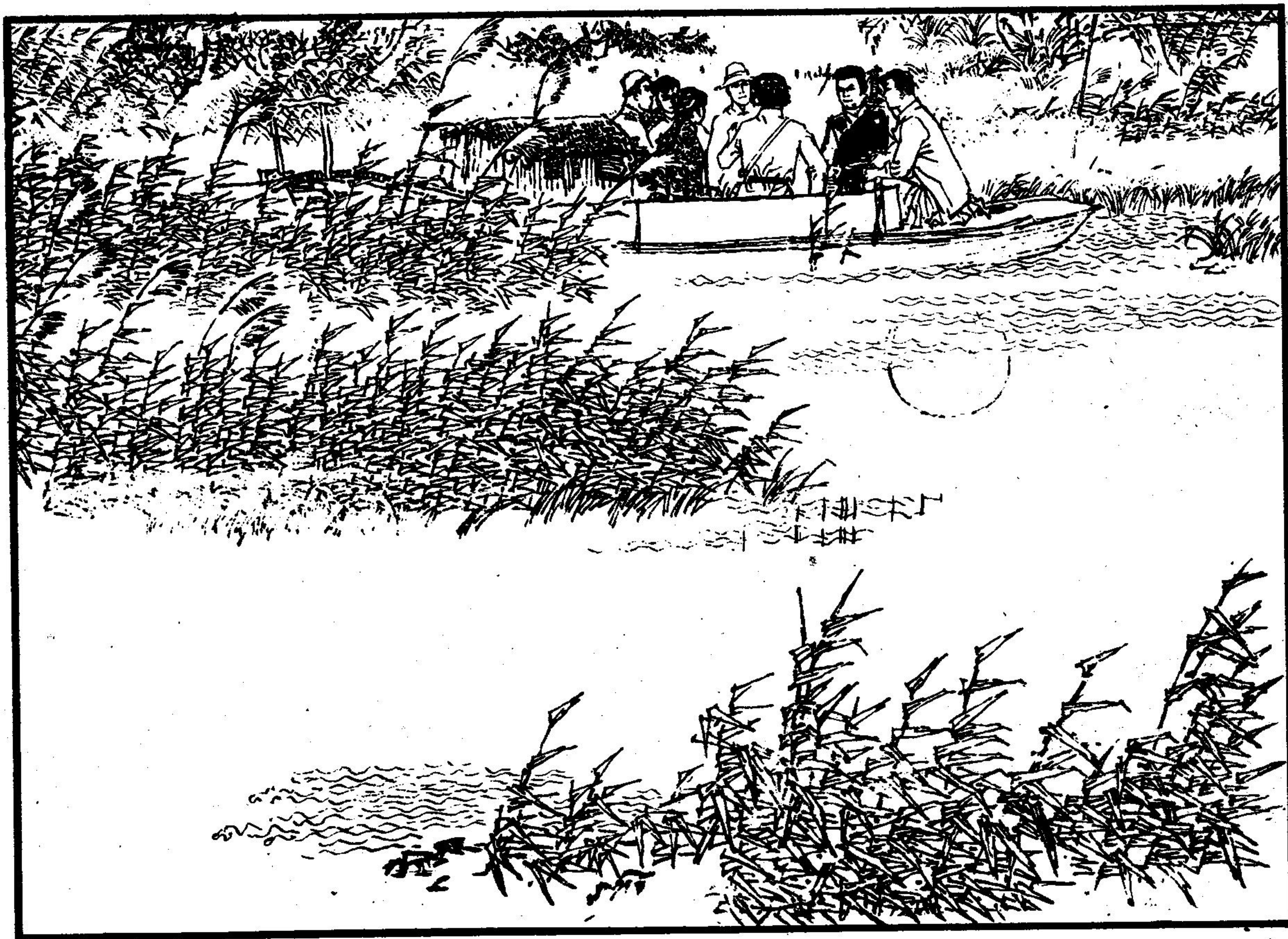
21. Then Black Bull said: "Quick, let's hear your plan, Sister."



22. "Let's discuss it together," she replied. But the others said: "First, let's hear your plan and we'll tell you what we think about it."



23. Nodding in agreement, she said: "I figured we would hold a 'wedding ceremony.' What do you think?" Everyone was puzzled. Black Bull, who was even more so, demanded: "Look if you have some great idea, spit it out."



24. She laughed, then quietly started to explain her plan.



25. "Great," Black Bull interjected. "I'm only afraid that 'Barrel' won't fall for it." Ta-kang pounded him on the back, saying: "Still as impatient as ever, aren't you? Let her finish."



26. After she had finished, everyone was happy. Then they fleshed out the plan with their own suggestions.



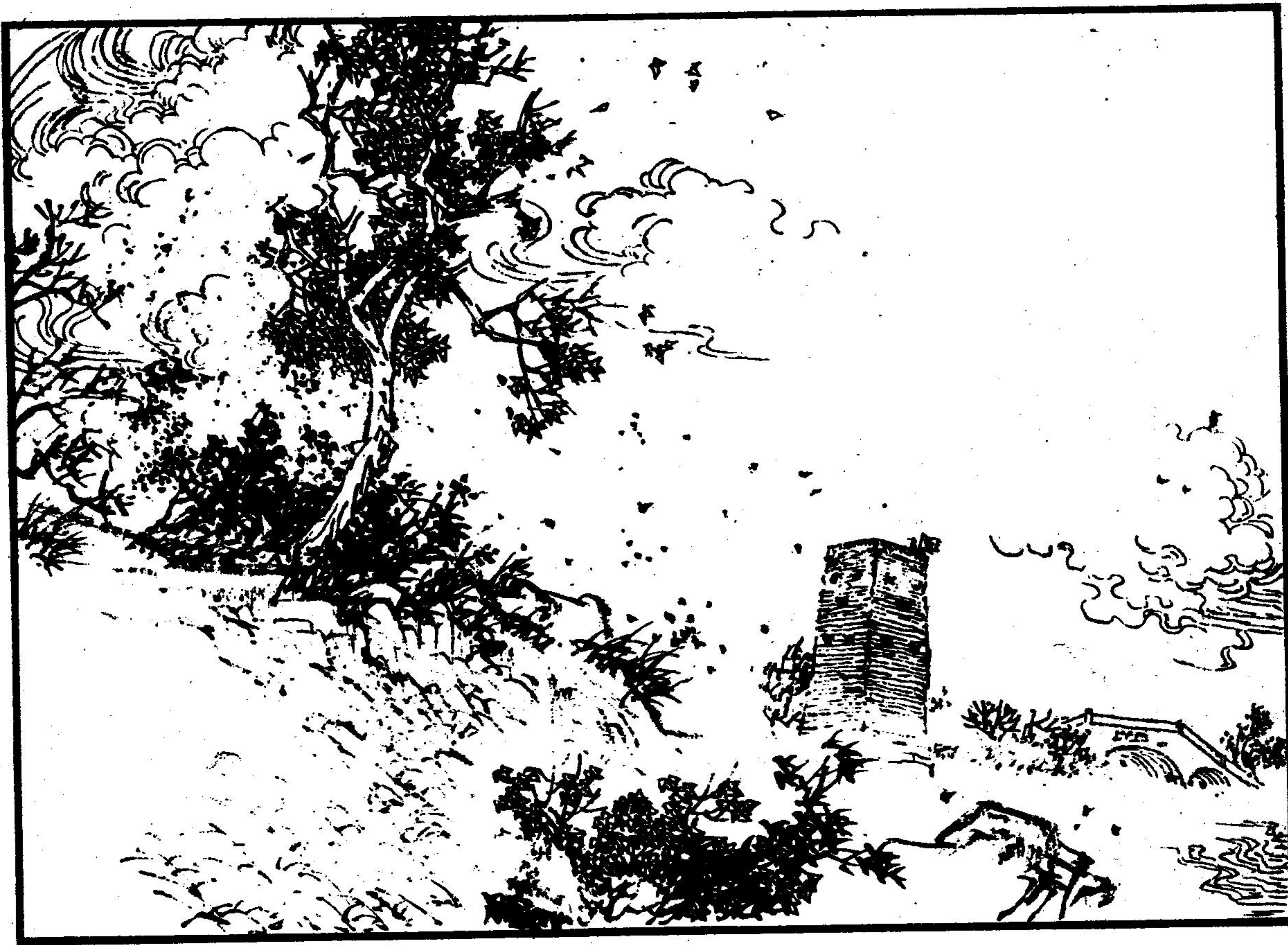
27. At last, she assigned everyone a task. Only Black Bull was left out. He sat anxiously to one side, rubbing his hands.



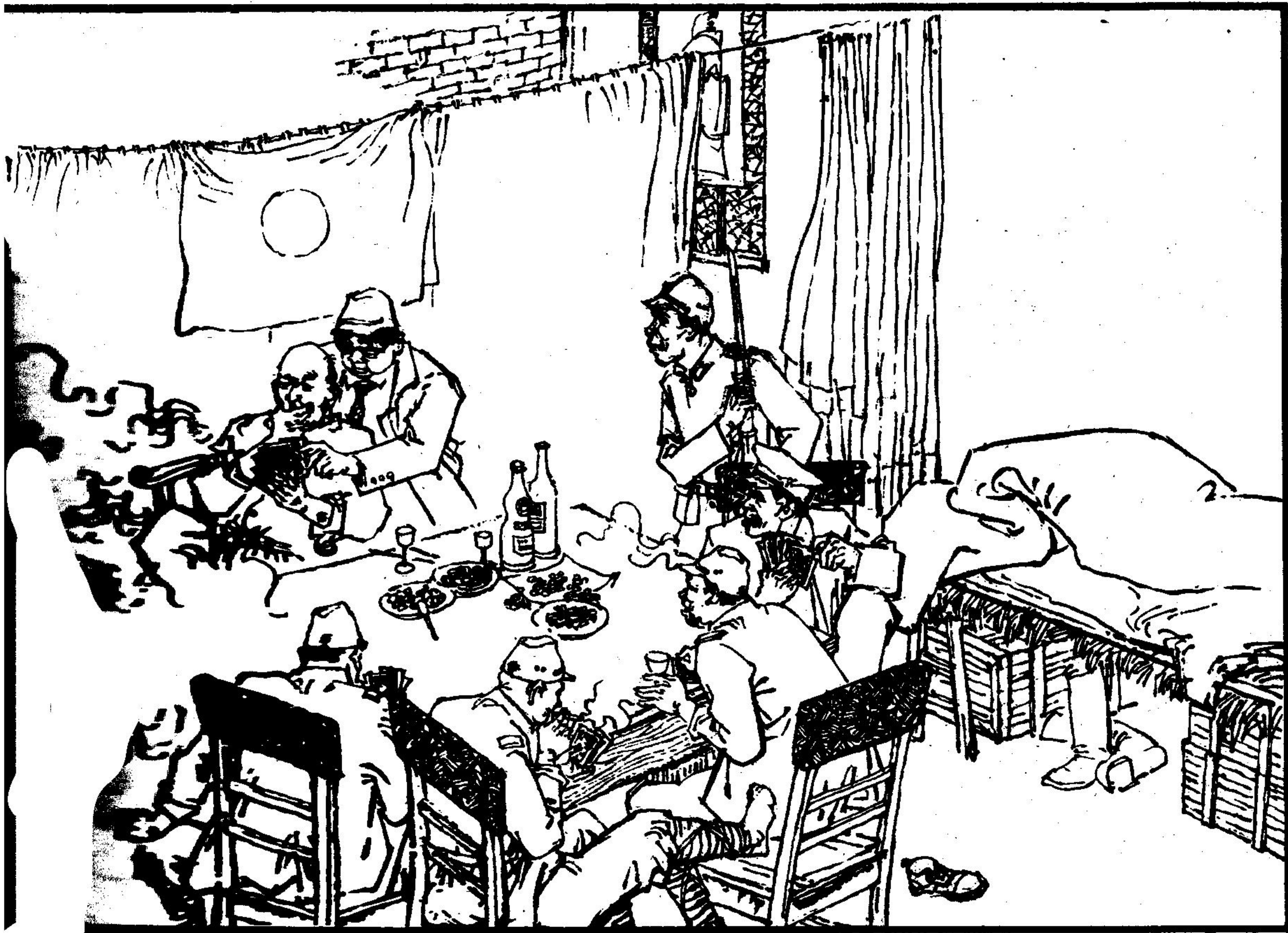
28. She smiled and said: "We're going to let you sit in the sedan chair, dolled up as a bride. But you must hold your temper and not go into action until the right time."
Black Bull said: "Yes."



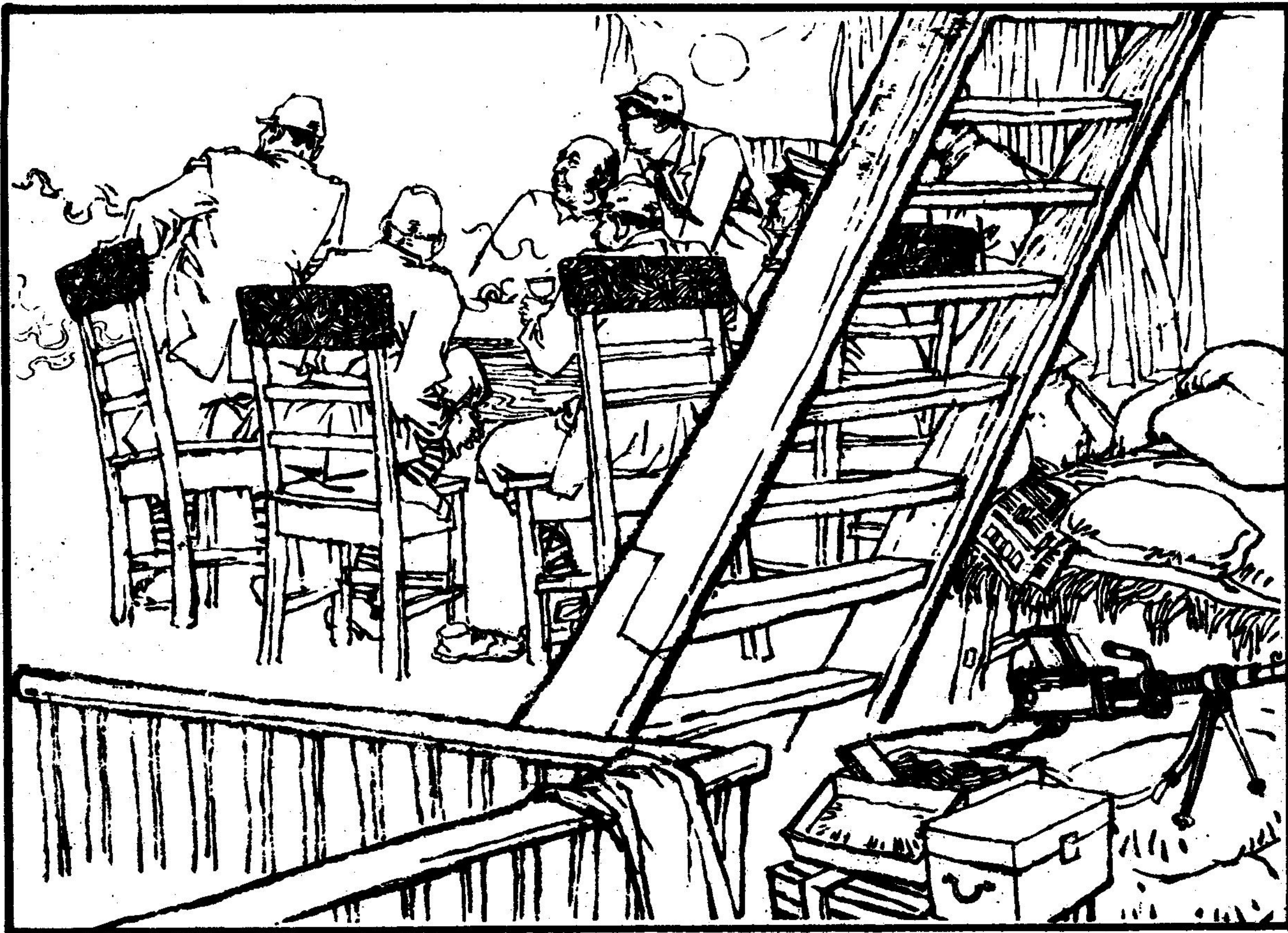
29. "Now you may go back and prepare," she added. "I'm going to report to the leadership." Then everyone took off.



30. The day arrived. Around four o'clock that afternoon, the northwest wind was howling, and the sky was heavy and overcast.



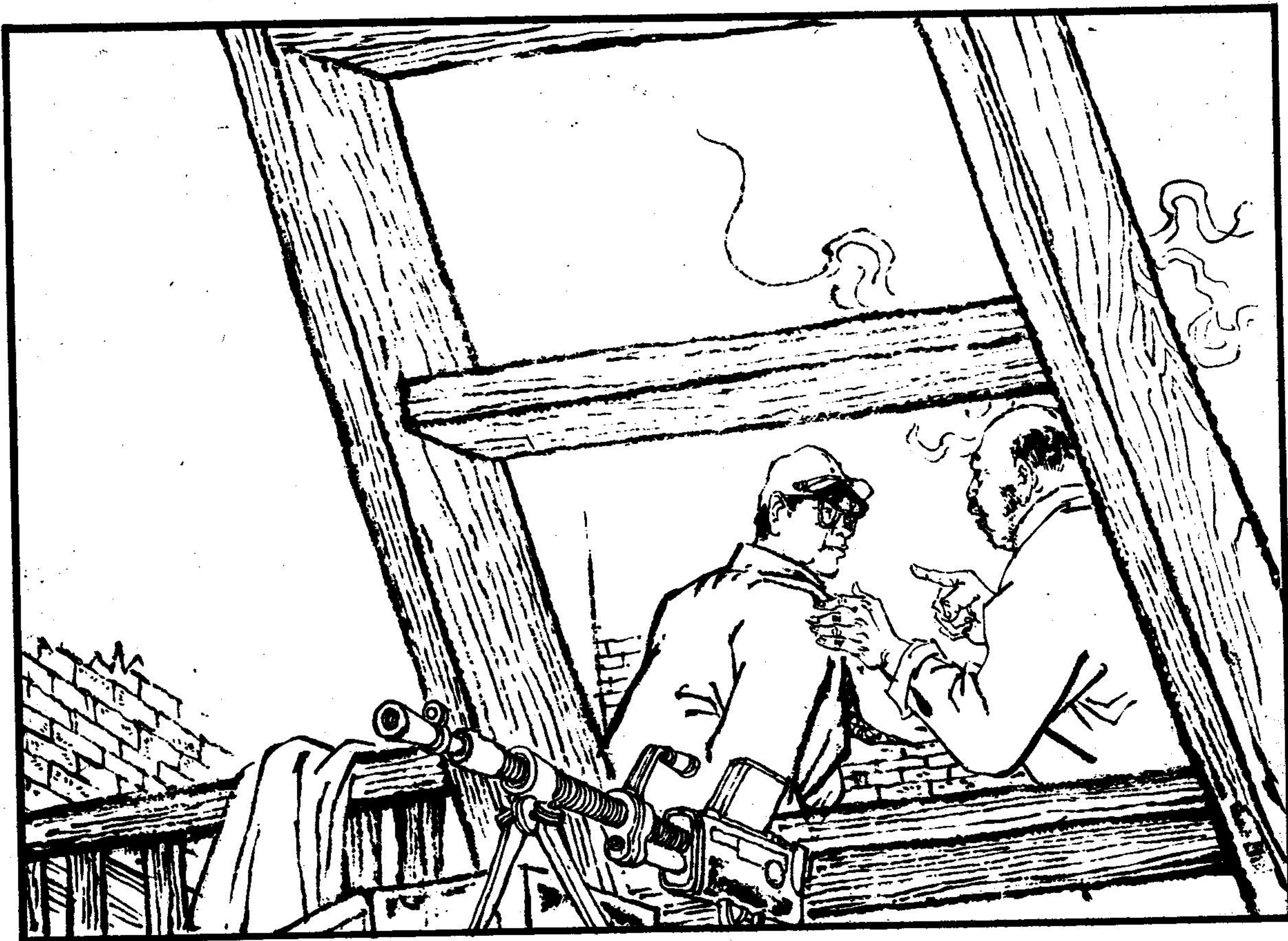
"Band" and his cronies were holed up in their stronghold with the interpreter. They were playing cards and boozing it up.



32. Suddenly, from outside came the sounds of explosions. The Japanese were startled. Listening closely, they heard several different sounds.



33. "Barrel" mumbled a few words to a tall, skinny soldier beside him. The soldier then saluted and went out.



34. The sounds came closer and closer, and became louder and louder. "Barrel" was ill at ease and told the interpreter to go out and see.



35. When that traitor went out to look, he saw only a brightly-embroidered sedan chair. It was being carried by eight sturdy men who were slowly making their way to the bridge.



36. Leading the procession was a woman in her thirties, wearing a flowered headcloth, a red jacket and a blue apron. She was holding a mahogany box. This was Sister Double Happiness disguised as the matron of honour.



37. Closely following were four young girls, all wearing red and green. They were carrying big red, ceremonial lanterns on which the golden characters meaning "double happiness" were painted.



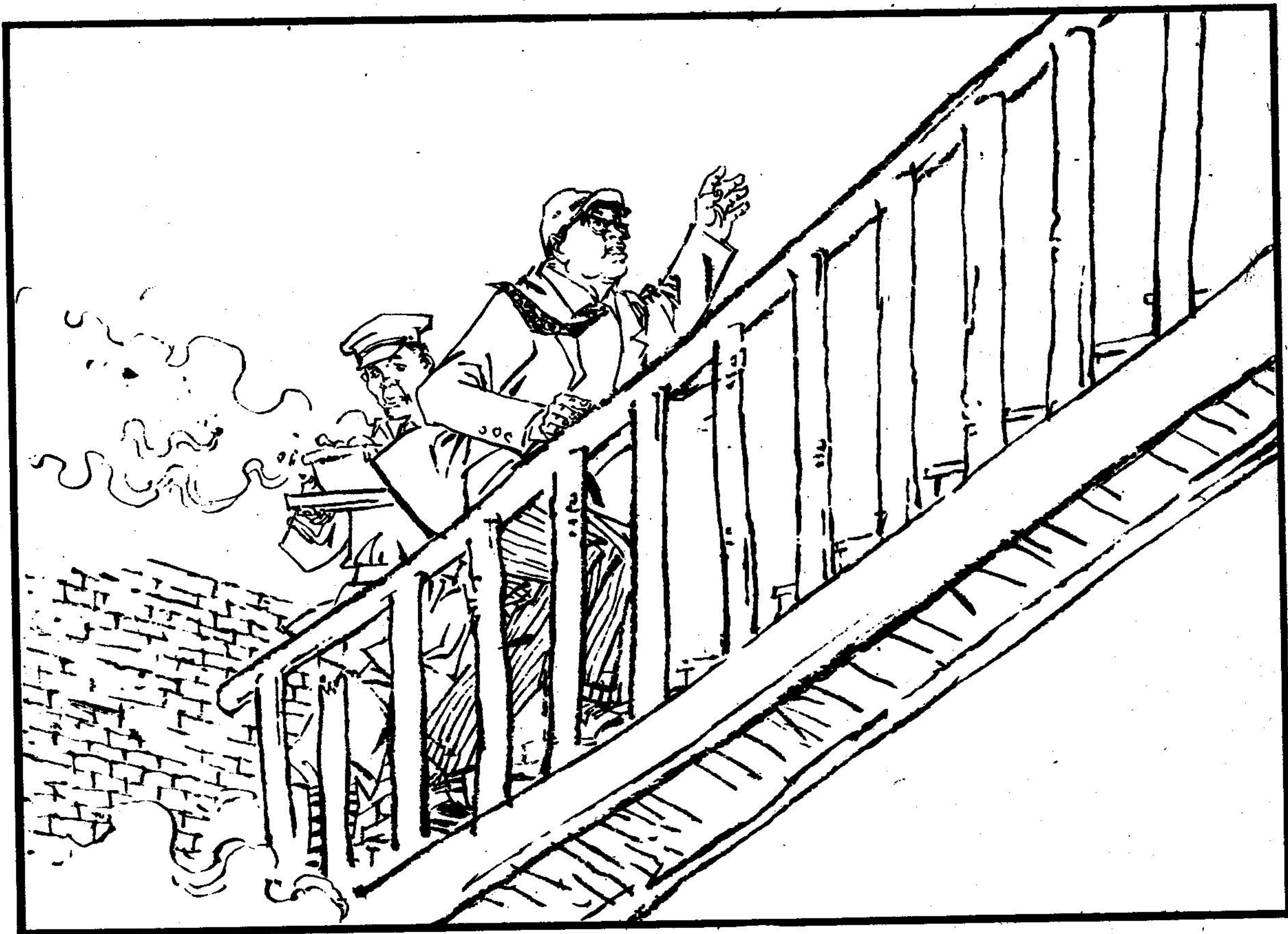
38. Several men were blowing away on their *sona* horns, adding to the noise.



39. Before and behind the sedan chair, some people were setting off firecrackers. Others were carrying wedding gifts. It really was a festive scene.



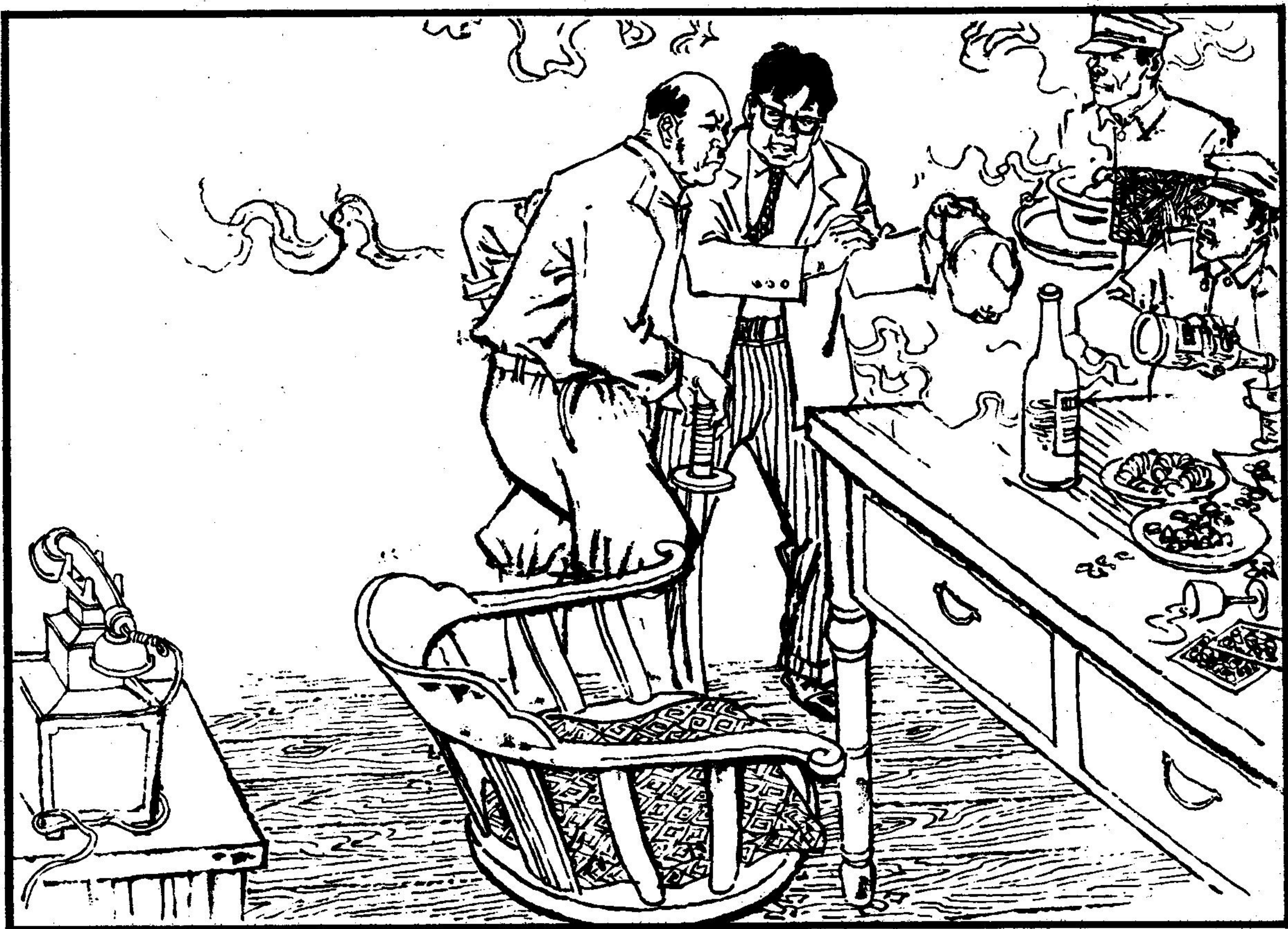
40. The skinny Japanese soldier stood to one side, puzzled, while the interpreter raced back to the stronghold.



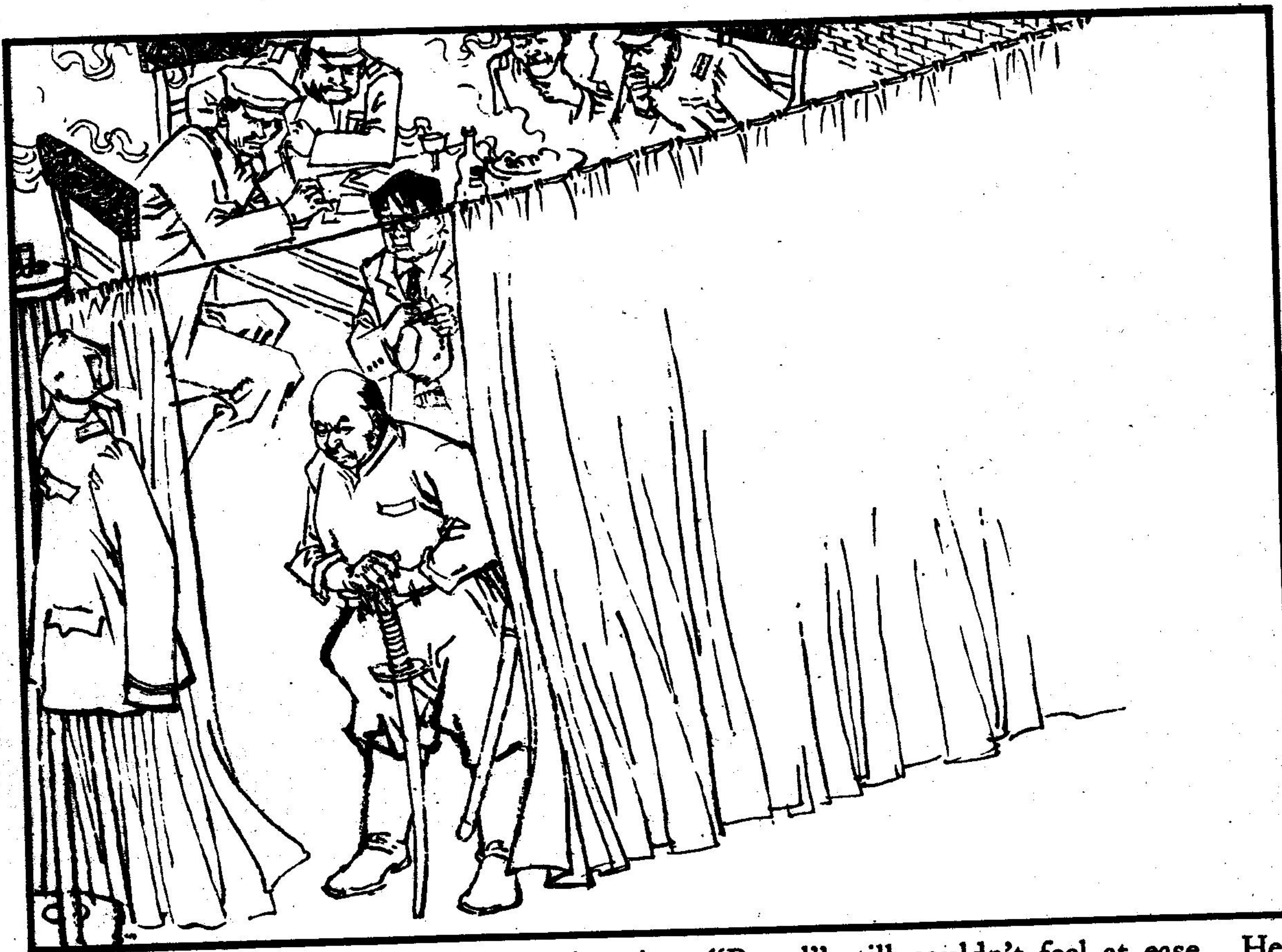
41. "Your Excellency, it is a wedding procession, with 'double happiness' leading the way," he yelled.



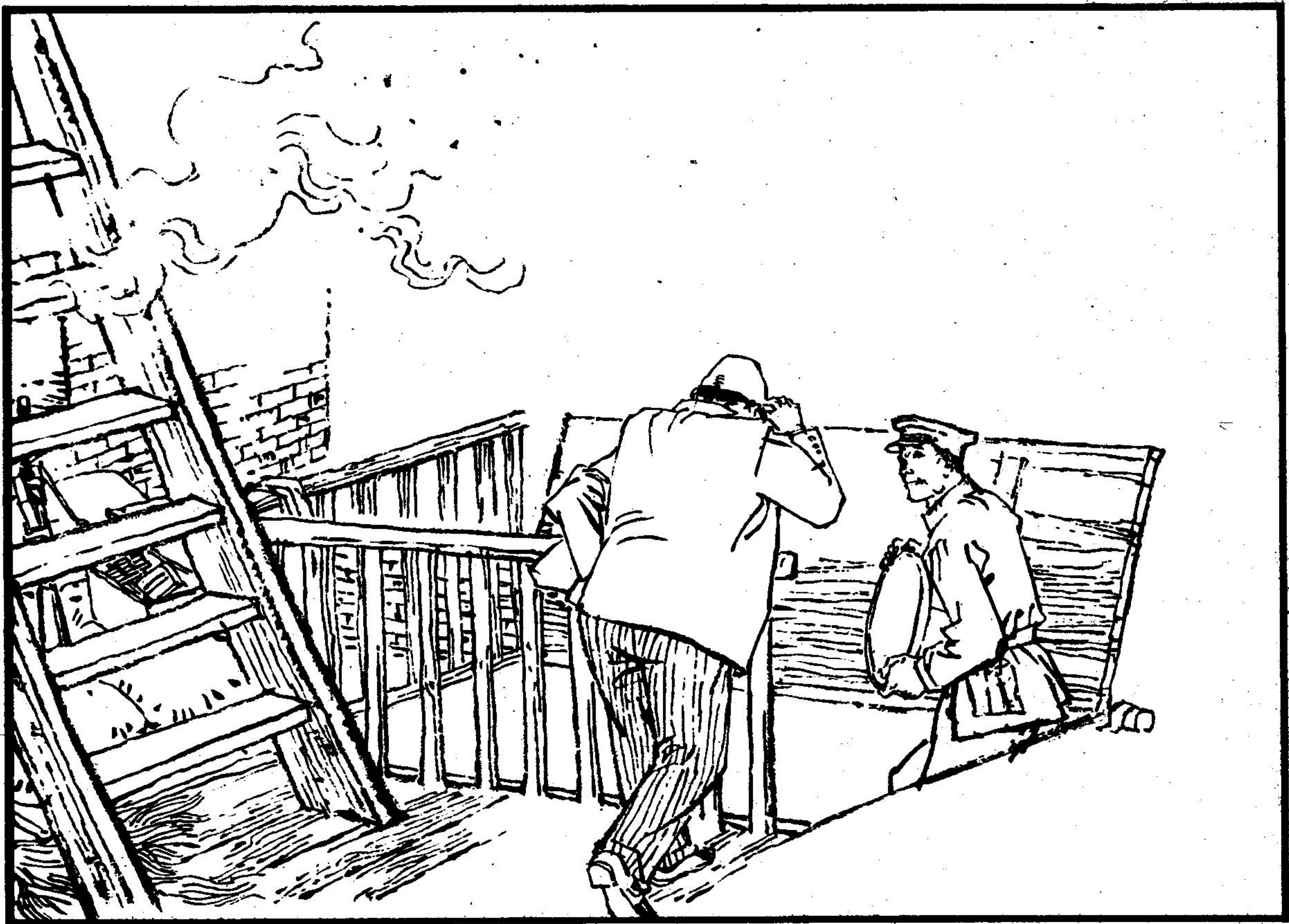
42. Panicking, "Barrel" quickly pulled out his samurai sword and asked: "What! Is that militia woman, Double Happiness, here?" Just the suggestion of her name was enough to make the enemy turn cold with fear.



43. The interpreter shook his head and said with a forced smile: "No, no. Don't get me wrong. It is the villagers carrying a sedan chair. The golden words 'double happiness' are on the red lanterns."



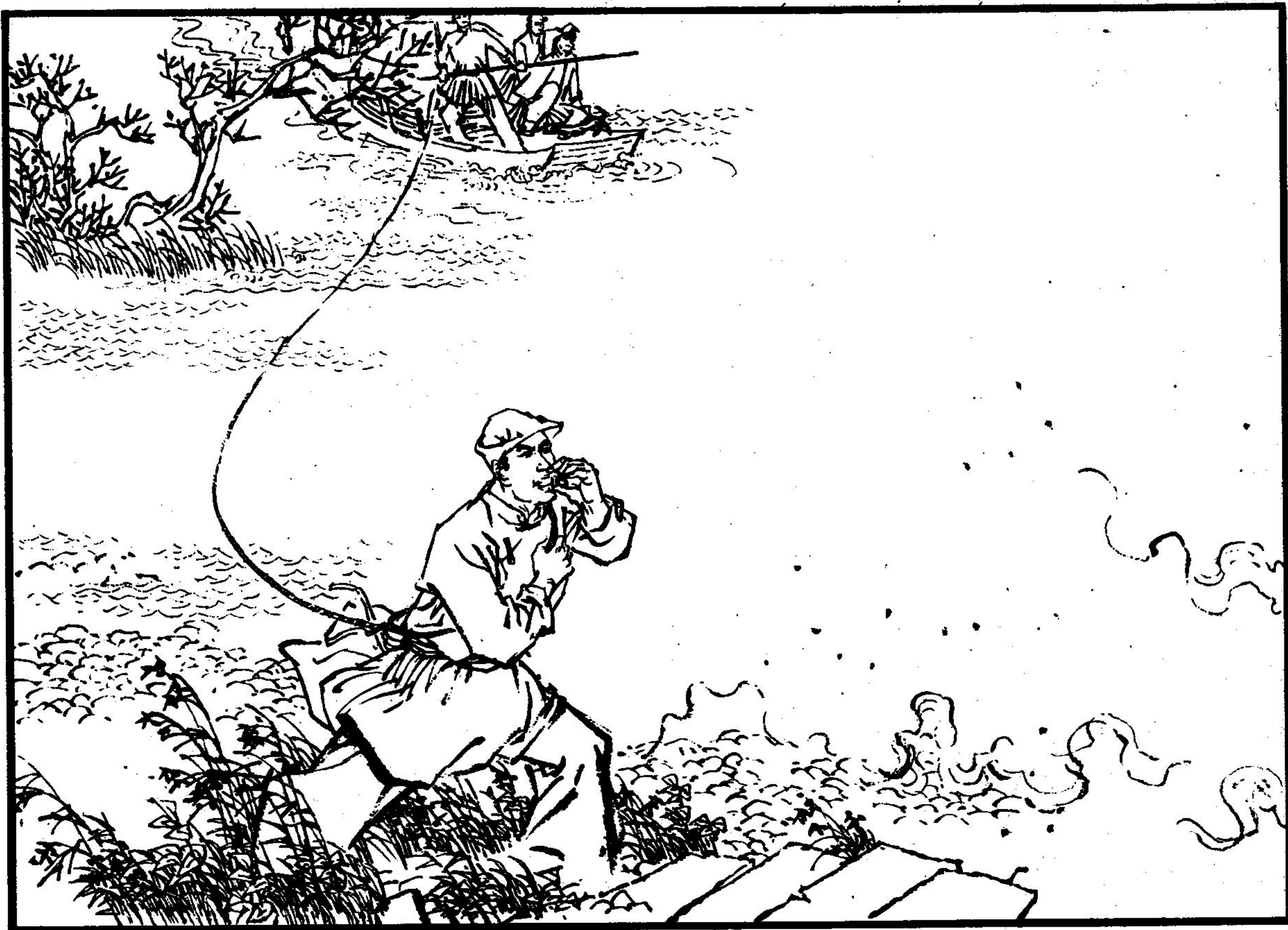
44. Even with the interpreter's explanation, "Barrel" still couldn't feel at ease. He said: "Go and take another careful look."



45. The interpreter thought to himself: "What a nuisance. It's clearly the wedding procession. Why be so suspicious?" But he didn't have the guts to say it, so he went out again.



46. Now the sedan chair was nearing the bridge. The skinny Japanese soldier hurried over and, in a nasty tone, said: "Halt! What are you up to?" The procession stopped, blocking the approach to the bridge.



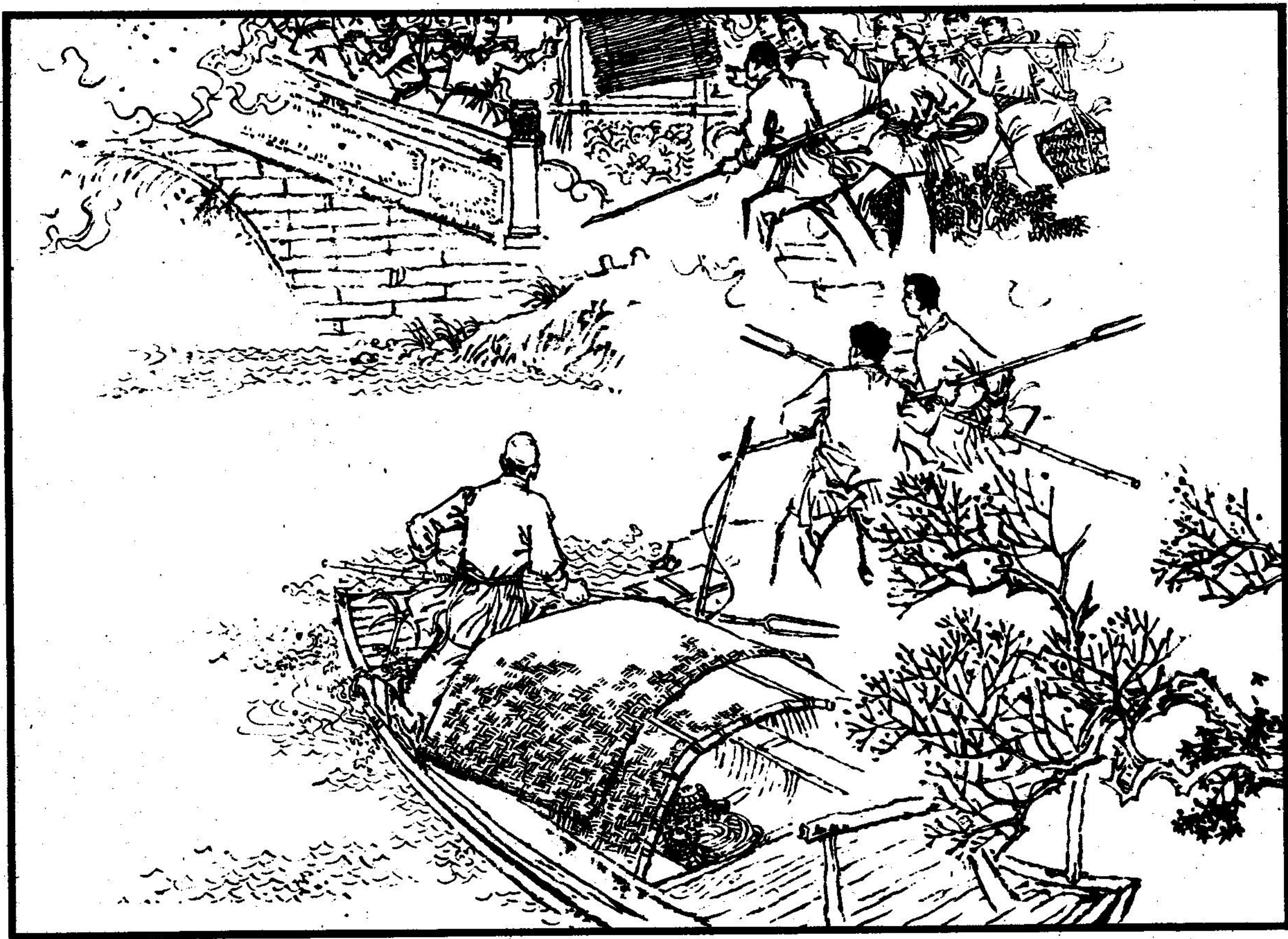
47. Then, from west of the river came a boat. Hauling it along the bank was Chin Ta-kang disguised as the head boatman. When he reached the bridge, he yelled: "Quick, out of the way! Quick, out of the way!"



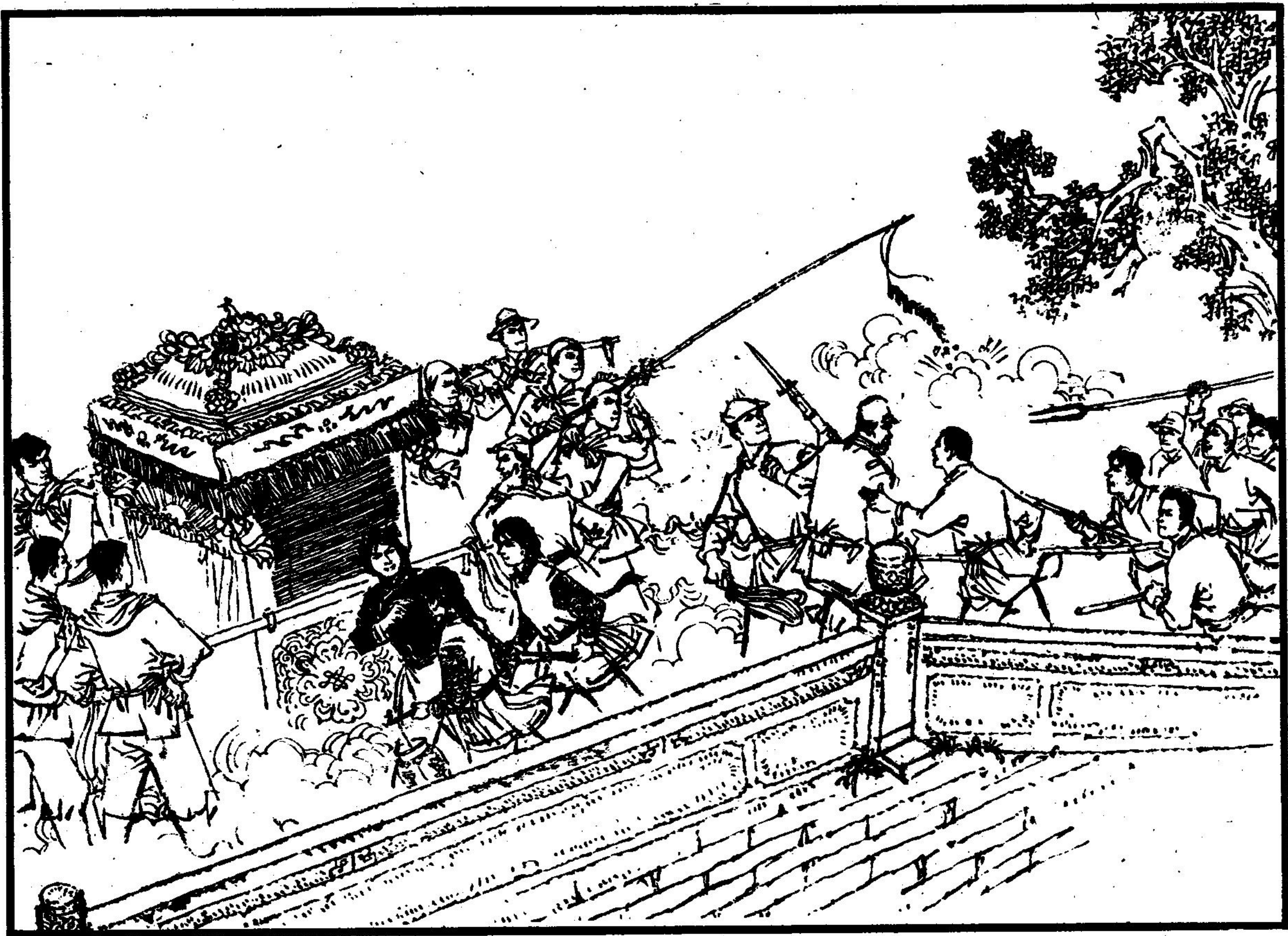
48. The people at the bridge were also in a bad mood and shouted back: "Who are you barking at? Can't you see that the way is blocked!" When the "head boatman" heard this, he started cursing in a loud voice.



49. The “matron of honour” saw the interpreter coming from the direction of the stronghold. She slowly walked over to the “head boatman” and started to argue with him.



50. At this, several men jumped out of the boat holding fishing spears and bamboo poles. They got onto the bank, ready to fight. The buglers were no cowards either and squeezed their way to the front and took up a fighting stance.



51. The sedan-bearers carried the chair to the middle of the bridge. The Japanese soldier tried to stop them but couldn't do anything about it. At the same time, the onlookers also came over and clogged up the bridgeway.



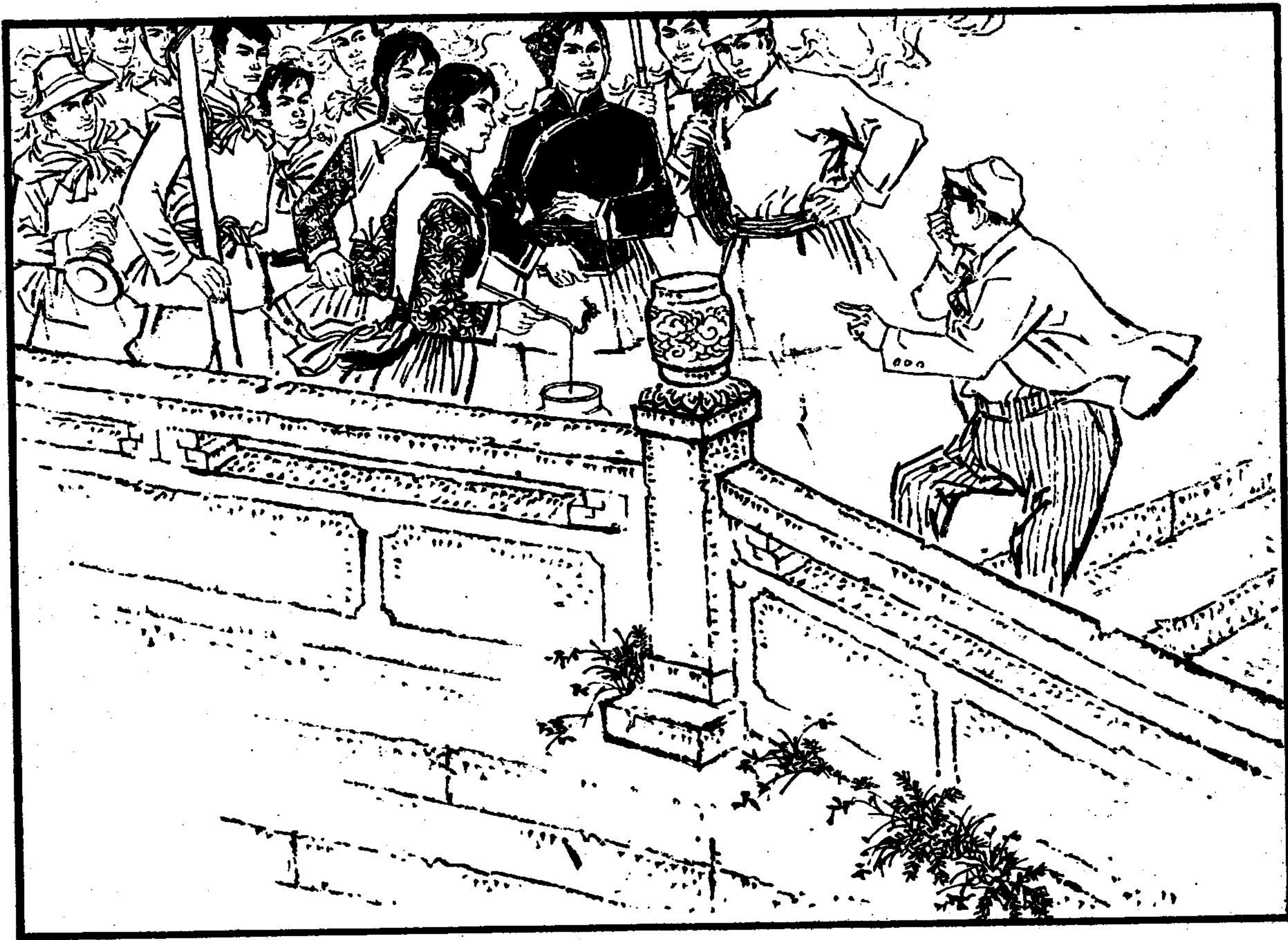
53. The "matron of honour" laughed and said sarcastically: "Ask about his opinions? You must be joking! Everything now is upside down. Who's going to believe whom?"



54. The "head boatman" angrily said: "You refuse to take the right road and instead waste your time here causing trouble. Why don't you drop dead!"



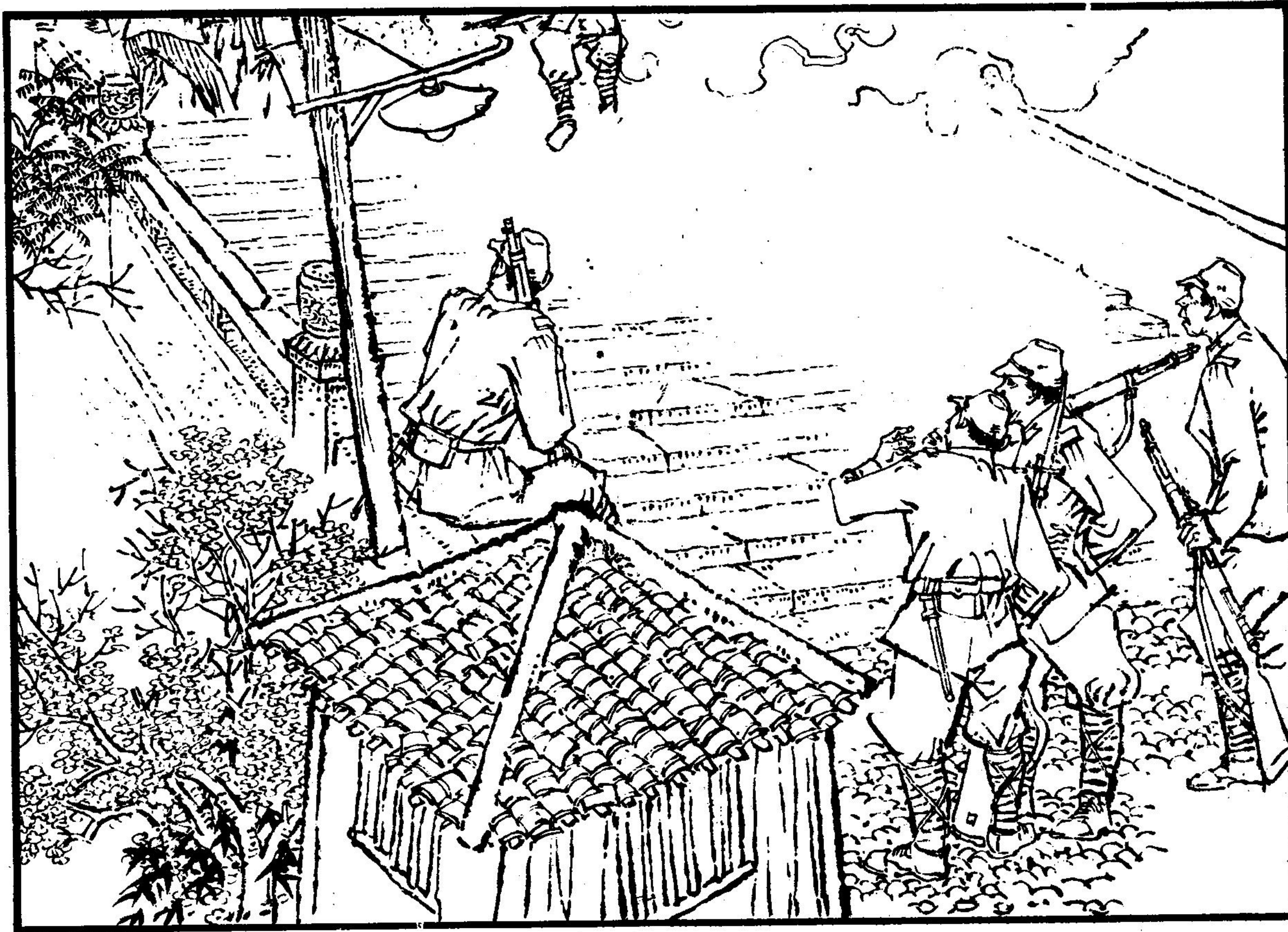
55. The "matron" pointed at the "head boatman" but her eyes were fixed on the interpreter. "You go your way and I'll go mine," she said. "No one will bother anyone else."



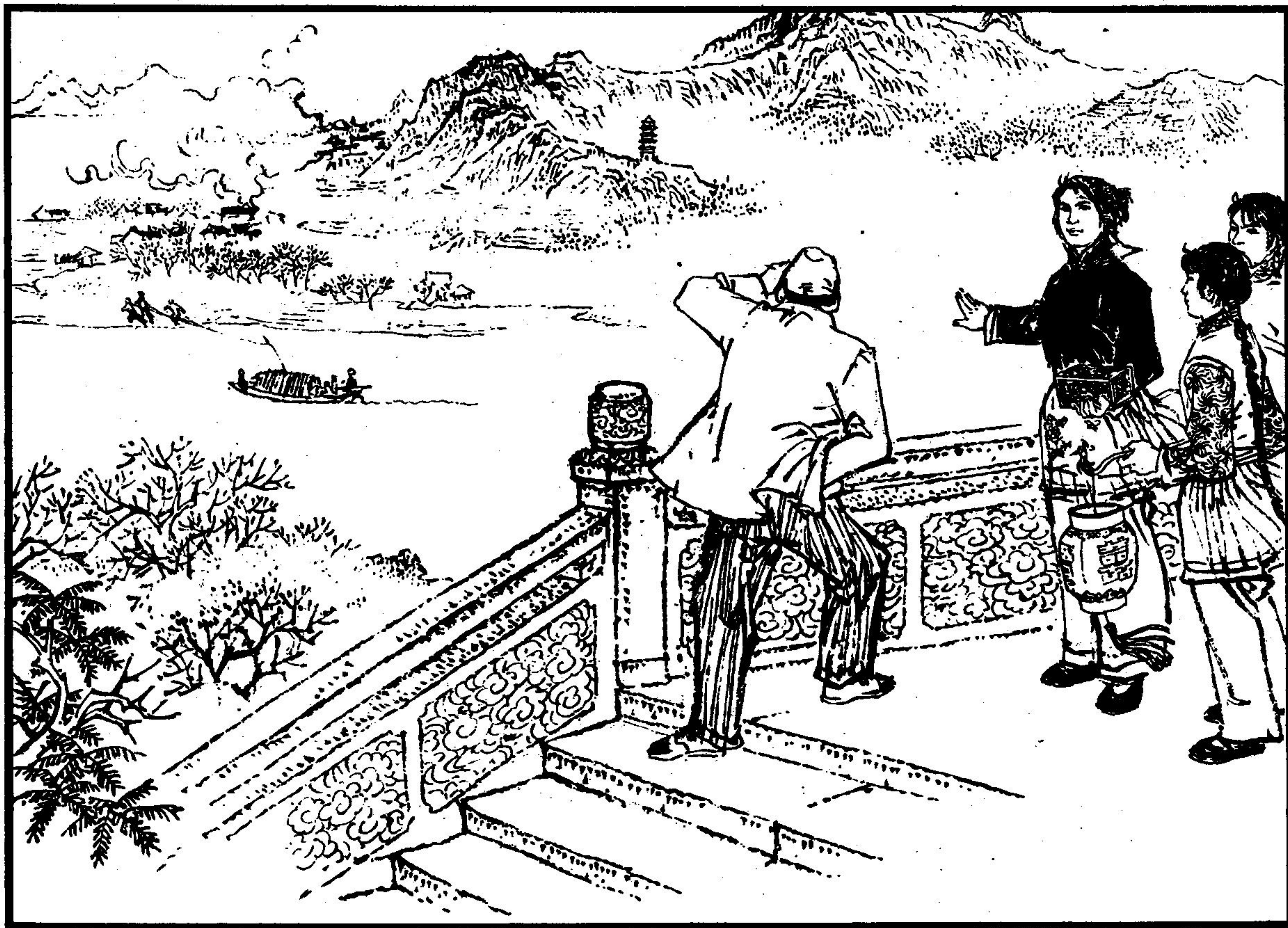
56. The interpreter listened to their bickering. Every sentence struck home. He was in a fix but had to control himself. So he just said: "No more nonsense. Where are you from?"



57. No one listened to him. They were too busy arguing. The interpreter couldn't do anything at all.



58. After a few moments, four more Japanese soldiers ran out to watch the scene. In order to show off and to impress the Japanese, the interpreter tried to threaten the "matron": "Hurry up and tell me — where are you from? The Imperial Army is coming to inspect."



59. Without even throwing him a glance, the "matron" replied: "From Kuangfu Town." The interpreter then asked: "Who is the bride?"



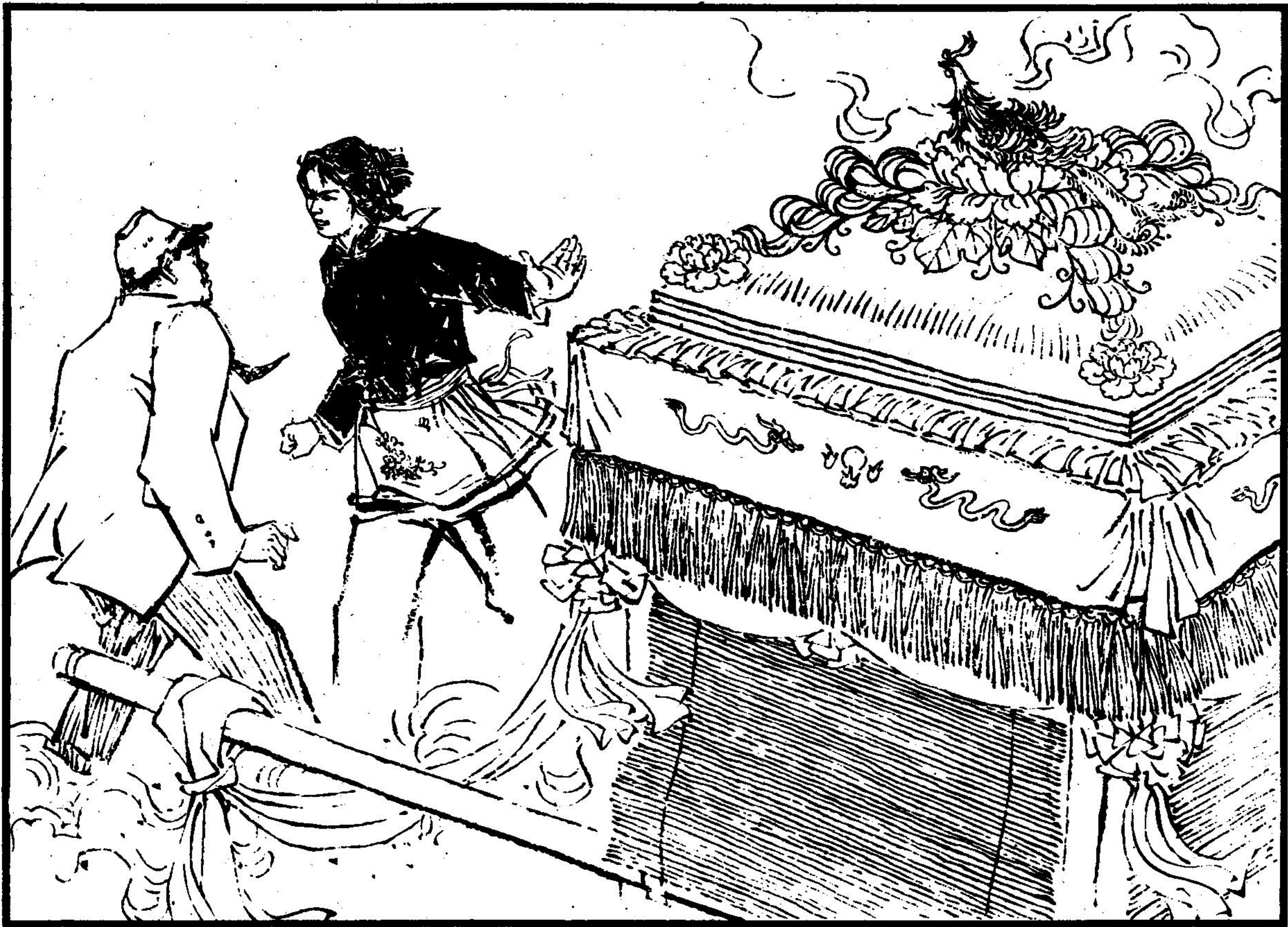
60. She took a large lantern from a girl beside her. On it shone the word "Chia."
"She is from the Chia family, of course."



61. Then he understood. The Chias were Kuangfu's No. 1 family. He said: "So that beauty is going to get married. Who's the lucky bridegroom, then?"



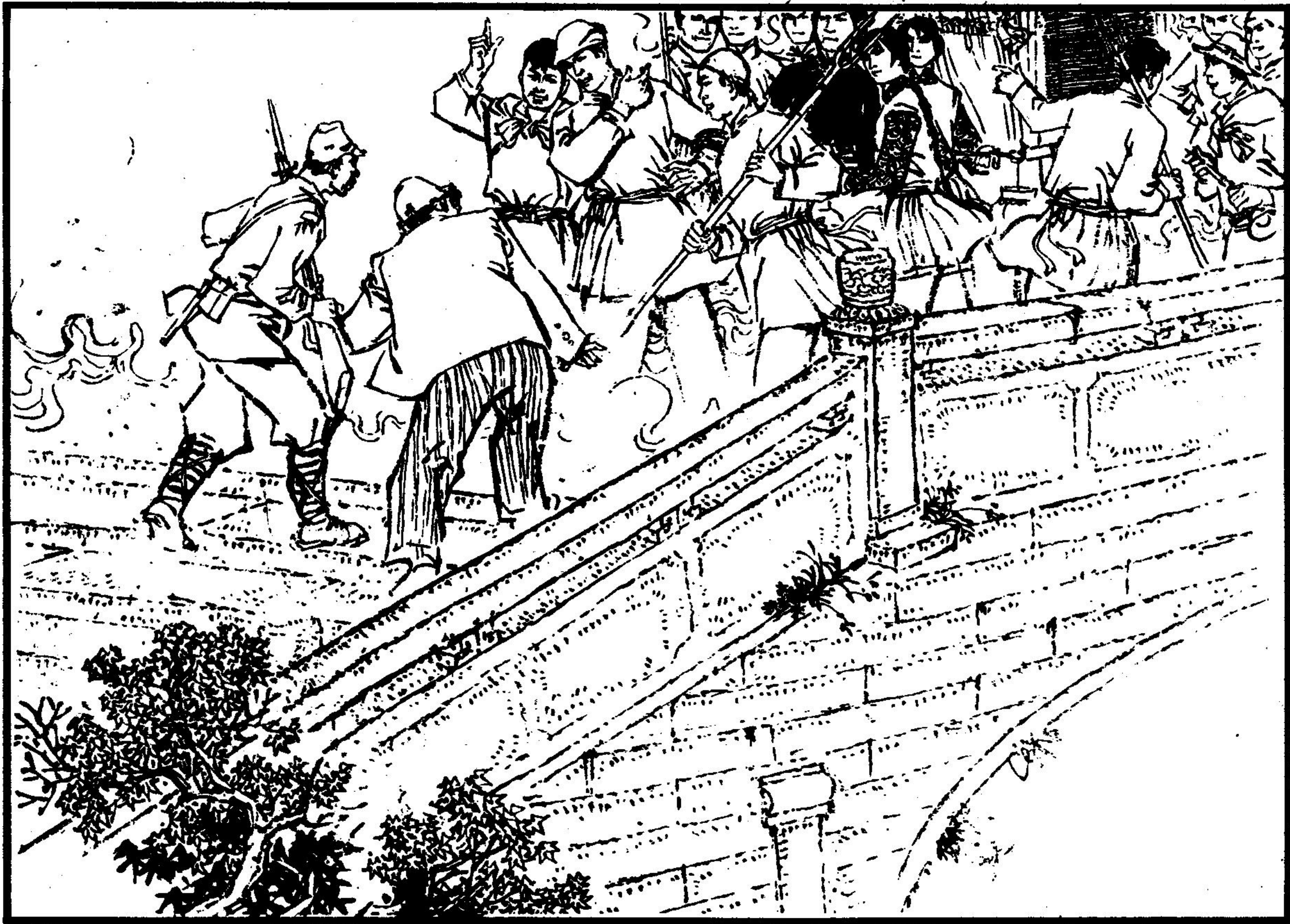
62. She replied: "A perfect match. He's the young master of the Chien family. Who else could be good enough?"



63. He had heard that Miss Chia was extremely beautiful but he had never seen her. "They say that one look is worth a thousand words, and this is the perfect opportunity," he said to himself. Then he stepped closer to pull back the curtain. But the "matron" hurried to stop him.



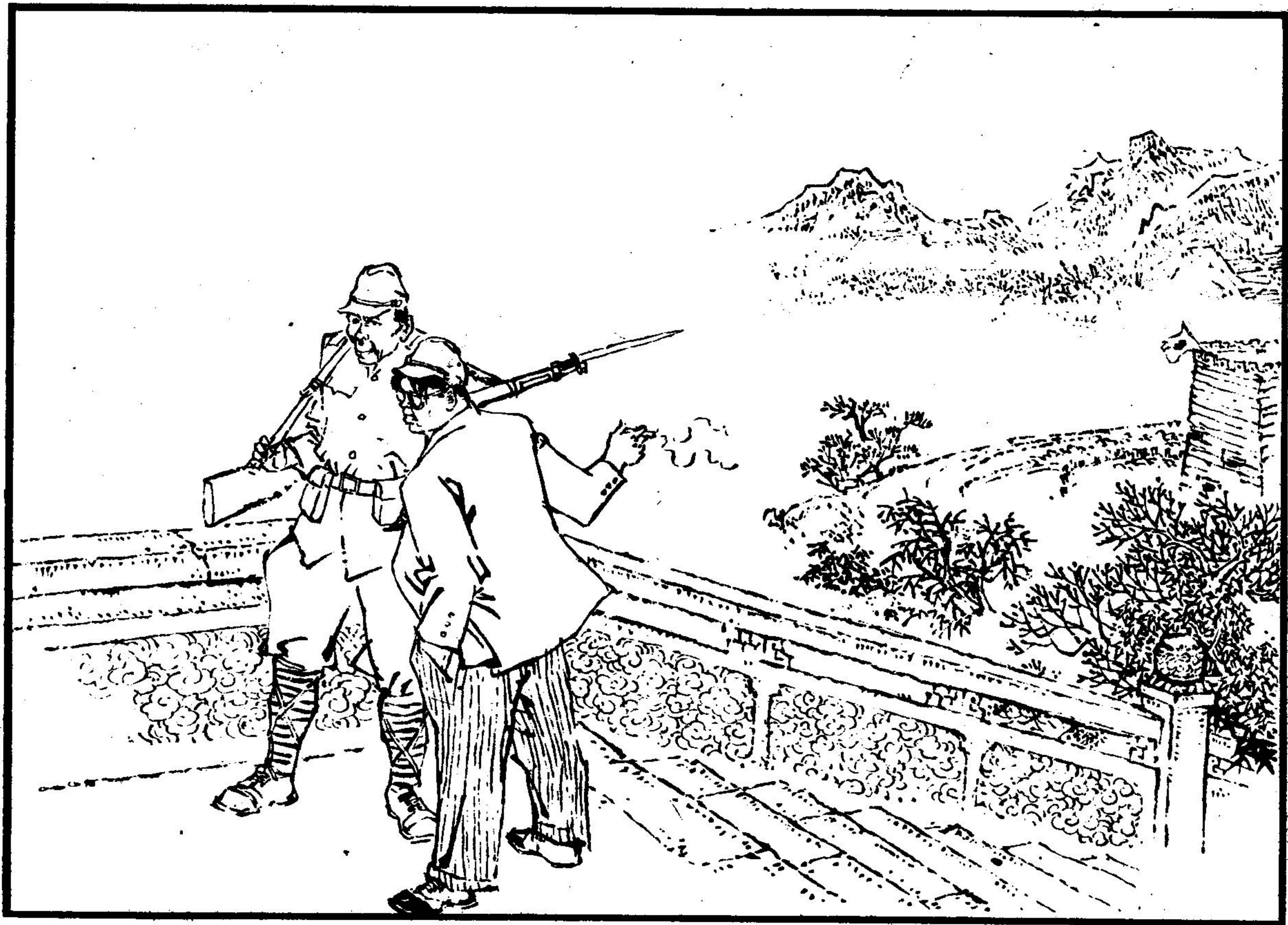
64. With a rascally grin on his face, he said: "Come on. Let's have a look. It's not much to ask." "Sorry, you can't," she countered. "The beauty is shy and timid. I can't be responsible if she is scared."



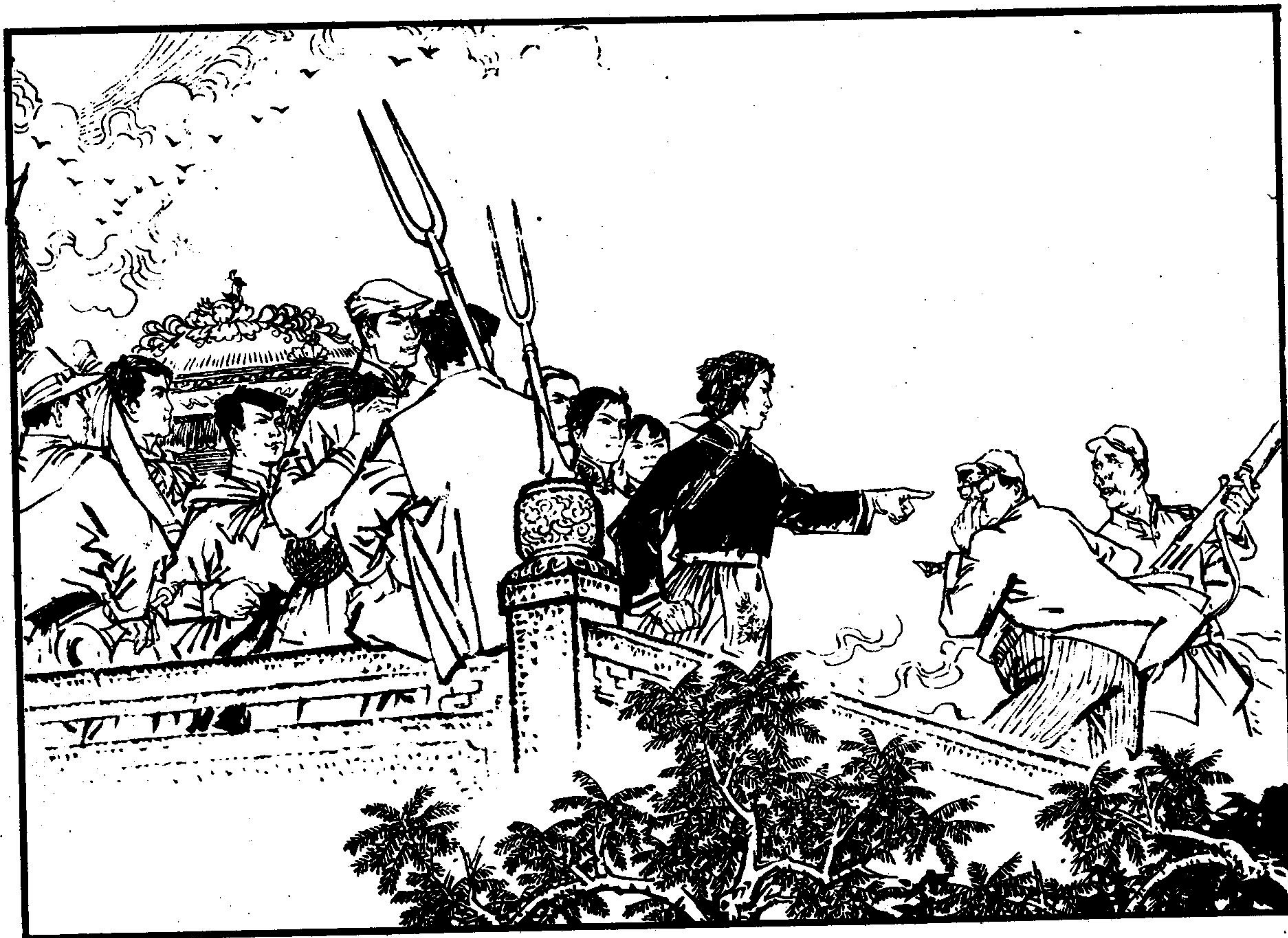
65. Just then, the chair-bearers and buglers, who had stopped arguing with the "head boatman," came to see what had happened. All crying out at once, they said: "Look, Mister, this must stop. Let us pass. It is getting dark."



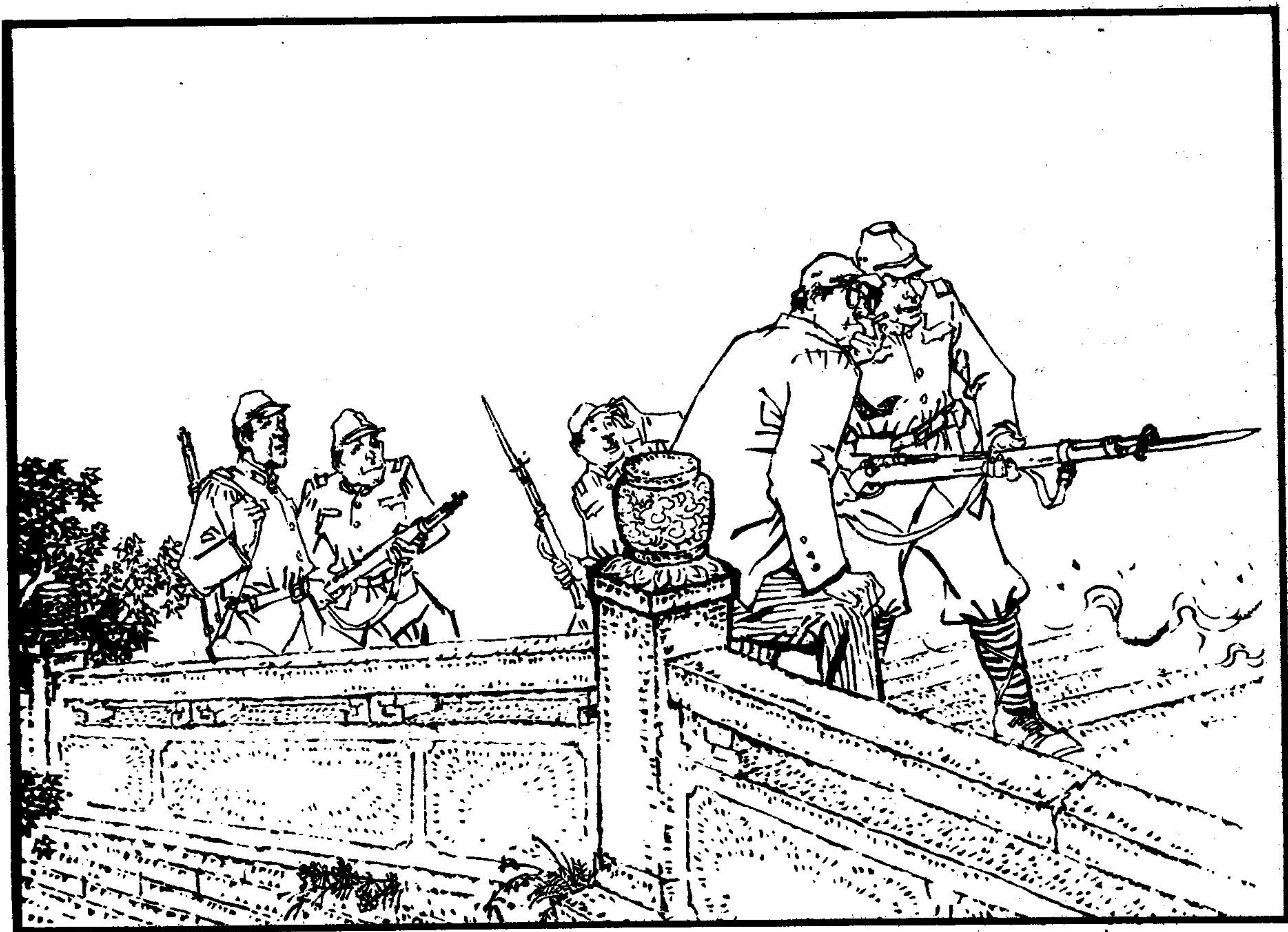
66. The interpreter's face became serious as he said: "I'm acting on the orders of the Imperial Army. Who dares to oppose them? Everyone must be inspected." Hitting upon an idea, the "matron" said in a measured tone: "Sooner or later you're going to run foul of us."



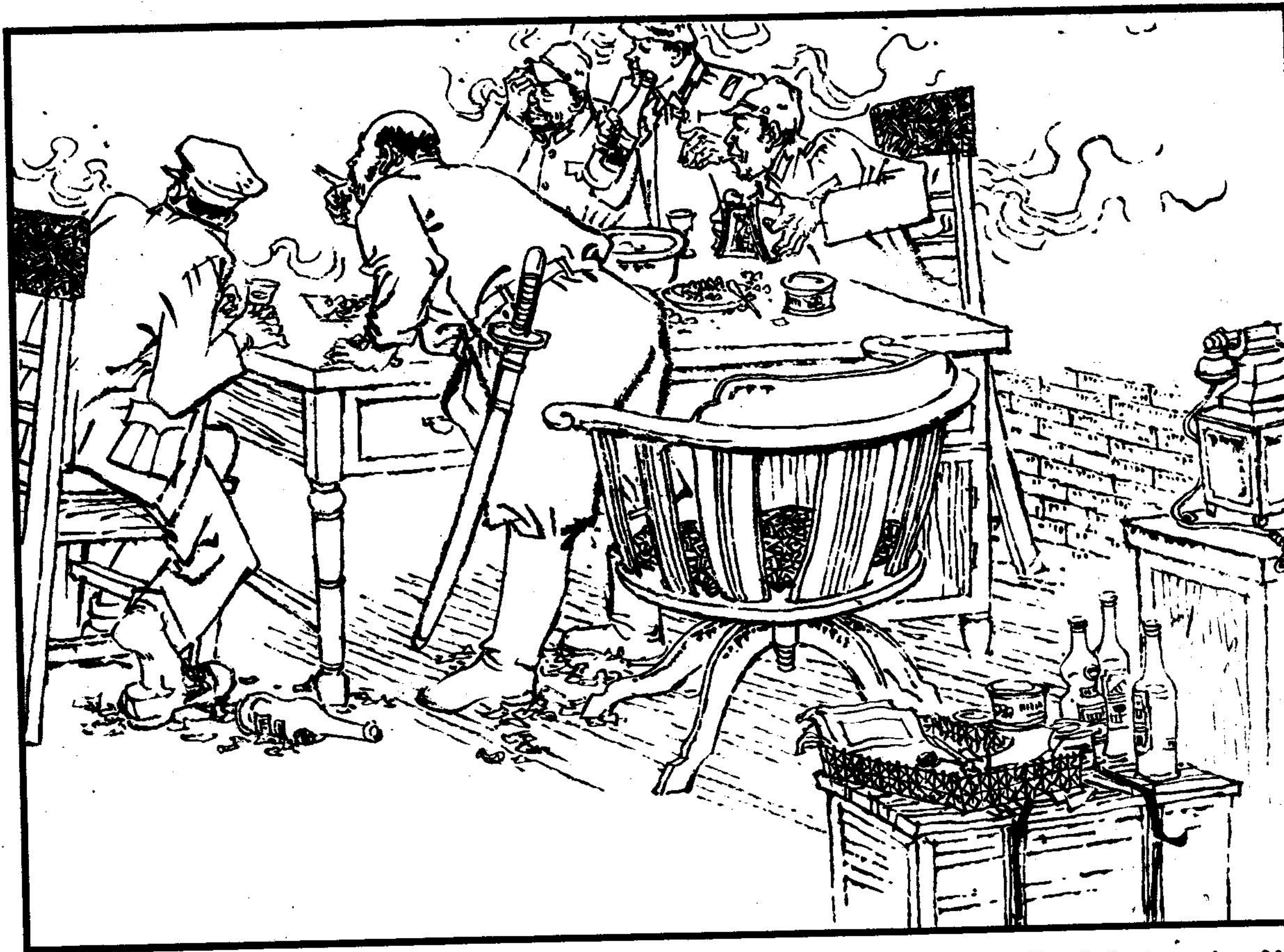
67. He did some quick calculating: Master Chia was a well-known rat and not a good man to cross. But he couldn't afford to act against the Imperial Army's orders. So he demanded in a faltering voice: "But who knows who's in that sedan chair?"



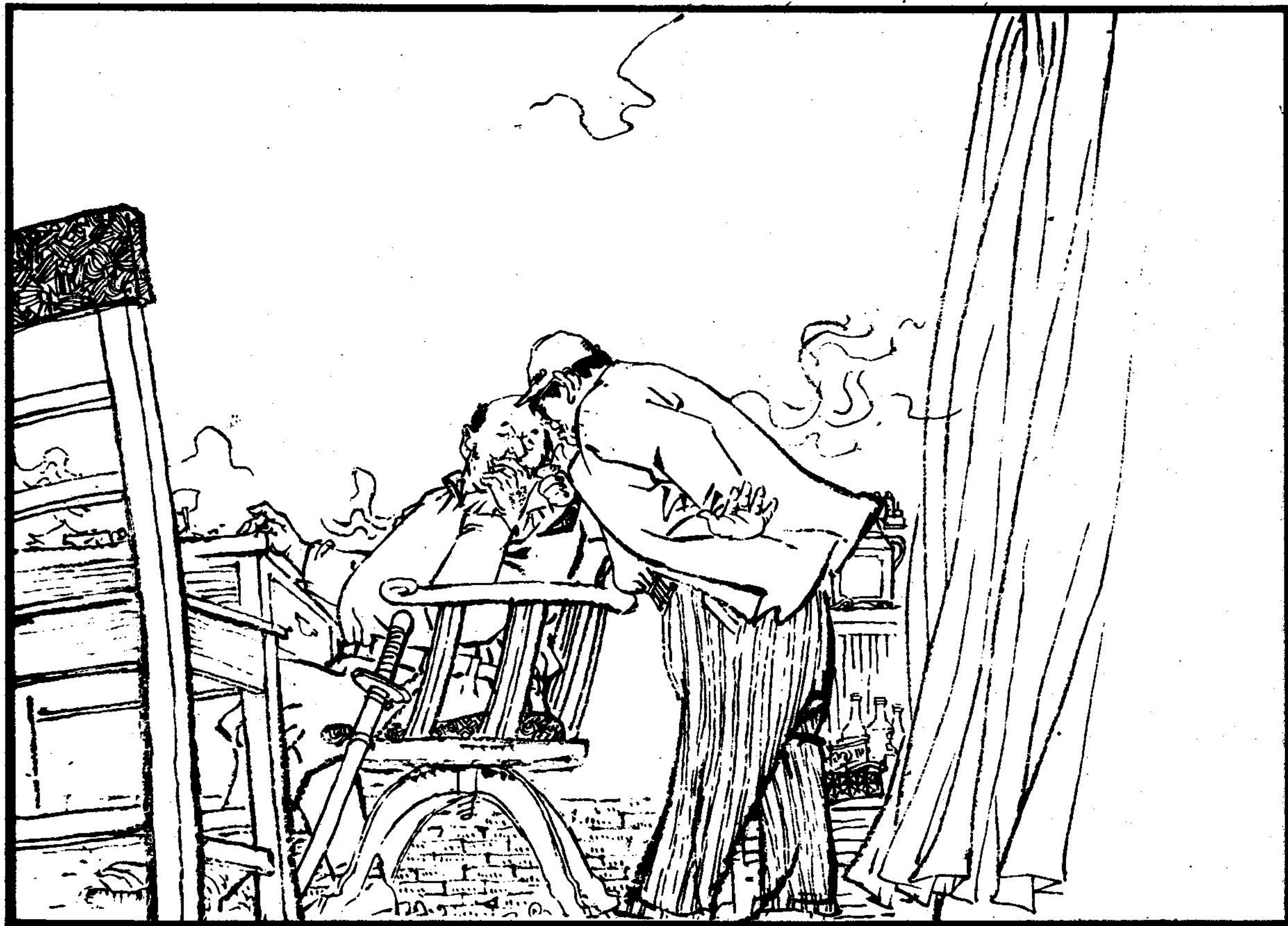
68. She replied: "Who are you trying to impress? Who can make trouble when getting married?" Then shouting towards the sedan, she said: "Miss, don't be anxious. Everything will be OK in a few moments." So saying, she ripped back the curtain to let him have a quick look.



69. As the scene flashed across his eyes, the interpreter felt that the bride really was seated inside. She wore a colourful headcloth and flowered clothes. Stroking his chin, he mumbled a few words to the skinny Japanese soldier. Then he waddled off towards the stronghold.



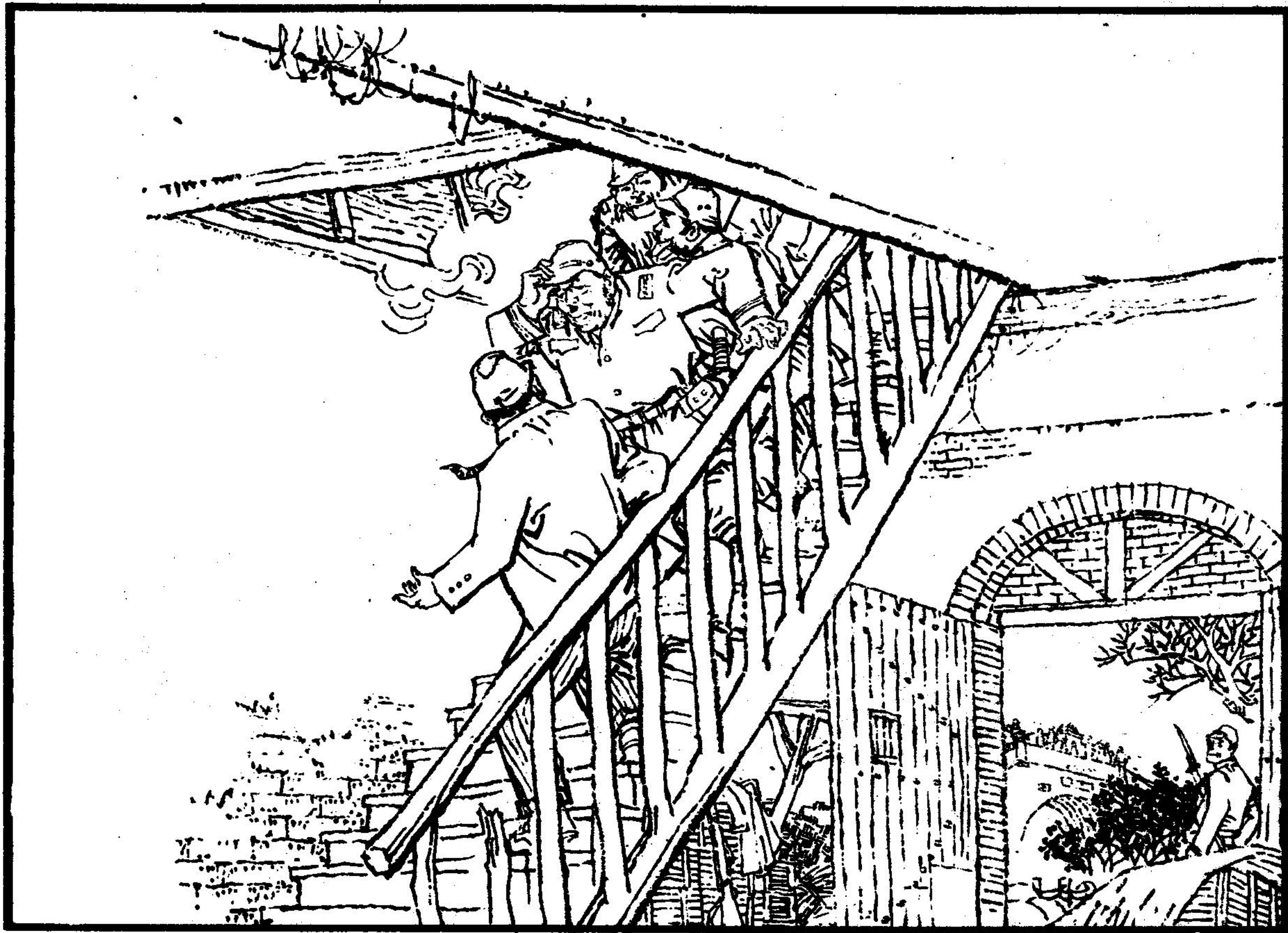
70. When "Barrel" saw that the interpreter was back, he asked: "What's happening?" Throwing out his hands in dismay, he replied: "Your Excellency, it really is a wedding procession, nothing else."



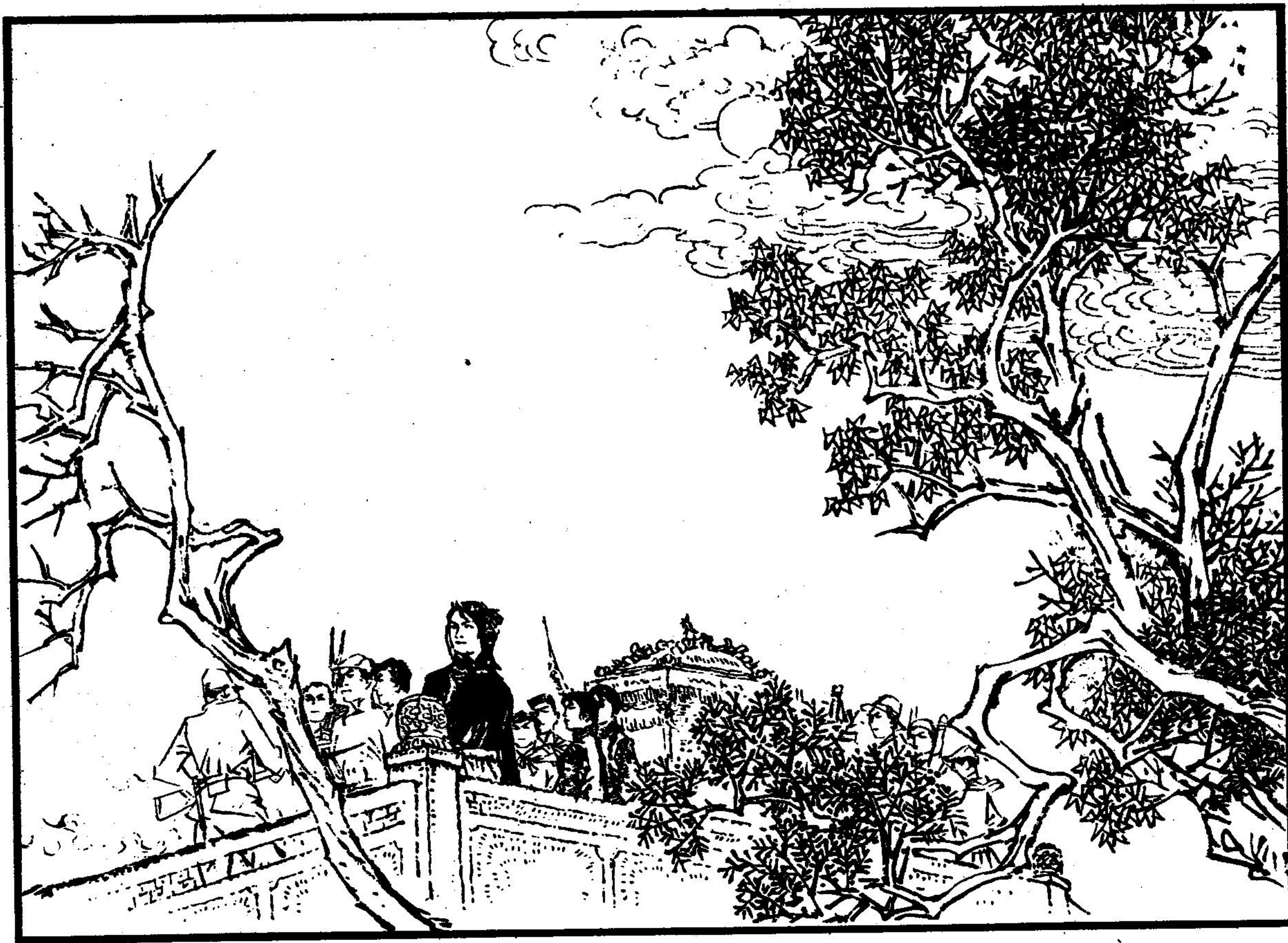
71. "Barrel" still had his doubts. The interpreter stepped closer and, in a fawning voice, said: "Your Excellency, no mistake. This bride is also the area's beauty. I saw her myself!"



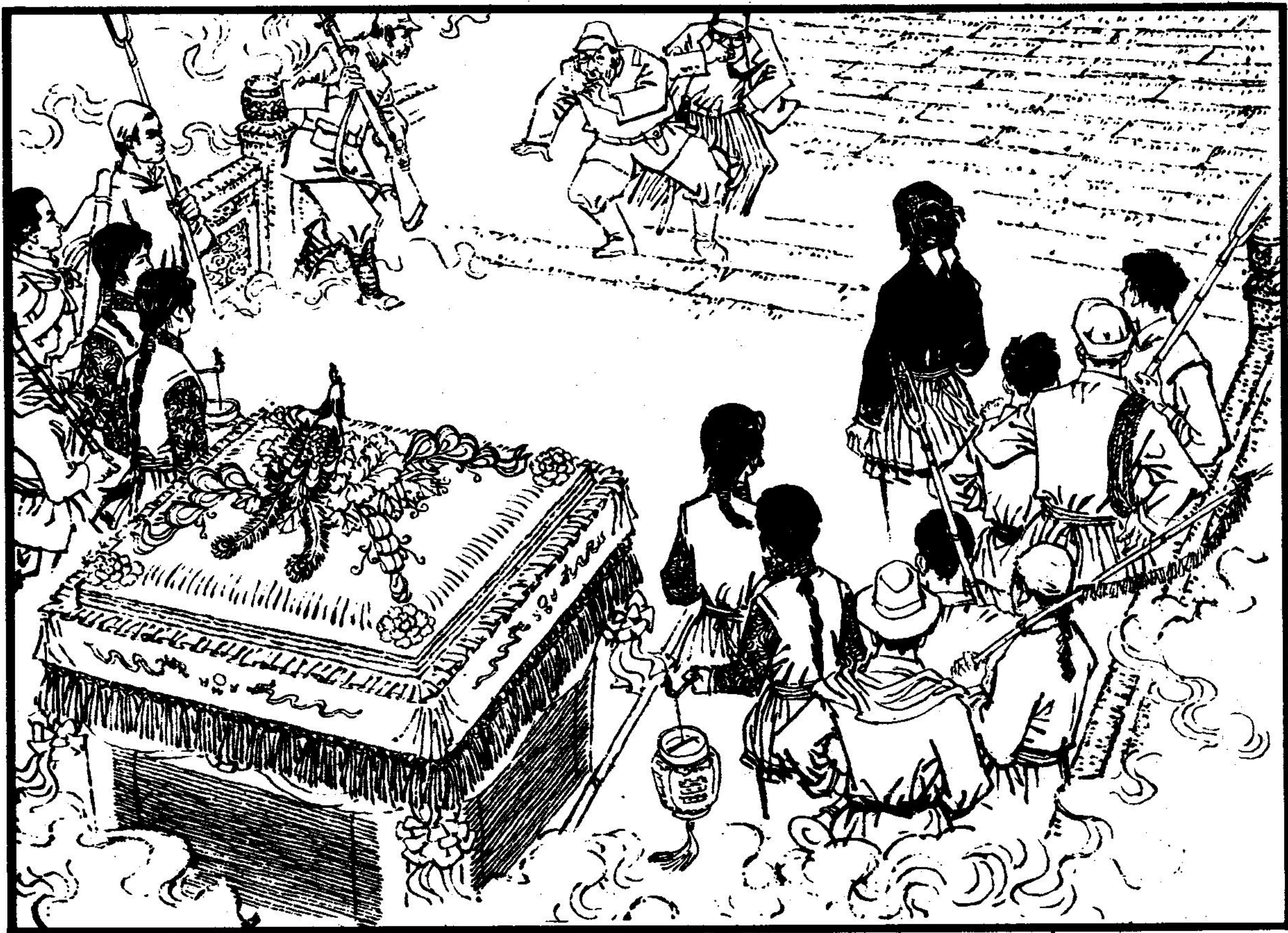
72. When he heard this, all his doubts vanished. Then an evil idea crossed his mind and he said: "Very good! I'll take a look, too."



73. But he was still a bit afraid, so he said to the soldiers: "Everyone follow me." They all rushed towards the door.



74. The moon had already risen. When she was dealing with the enemy on the bridge, the "matron" saw "Barrel" coming out of the stronghold. She was overjoyed.



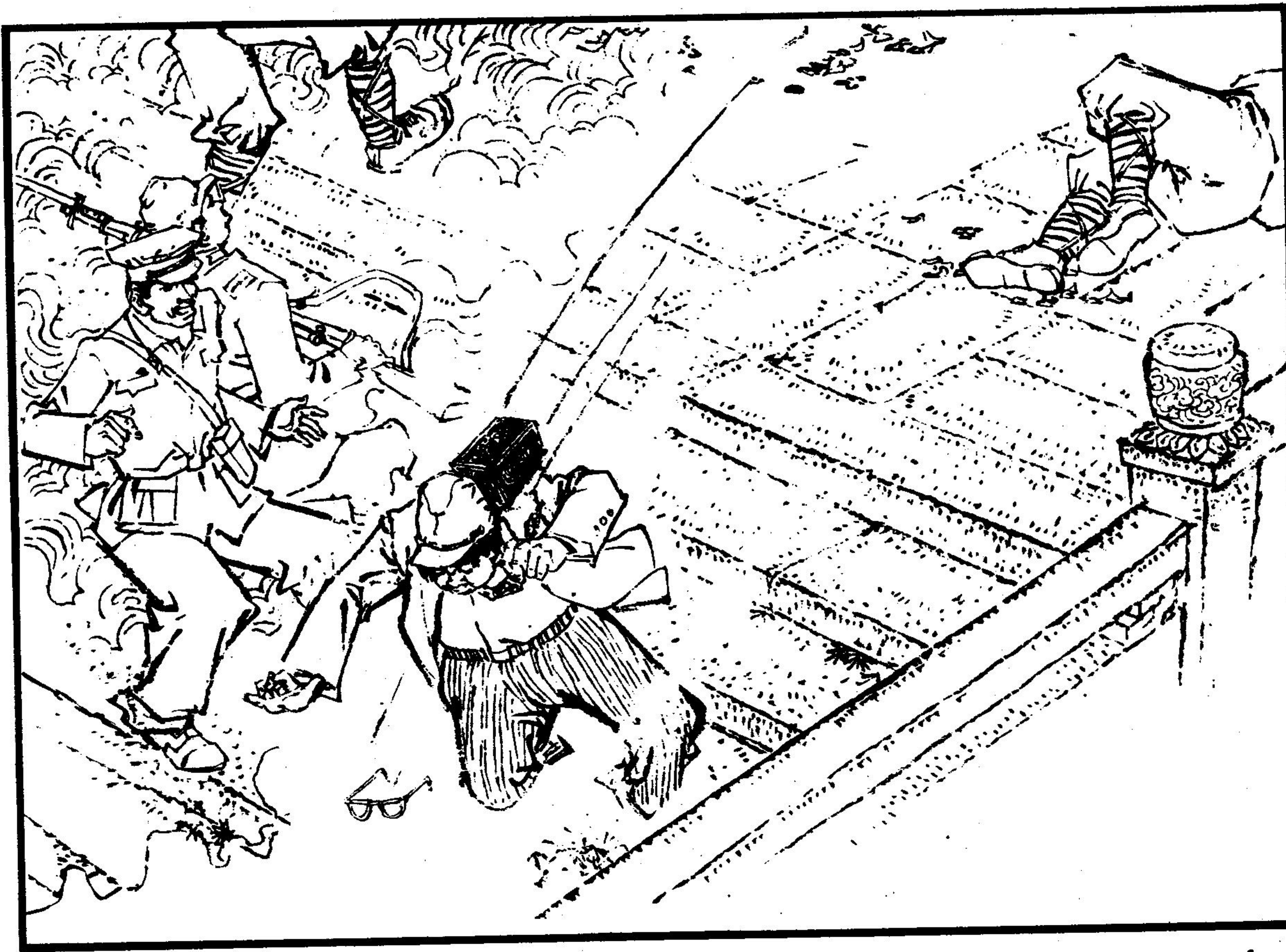
75. "Barrel" drew near and saw that all around were villagers who were sending out a bride. Then all his suspicions evaporated. He rushed up to the sedan chair to draw the curtain.



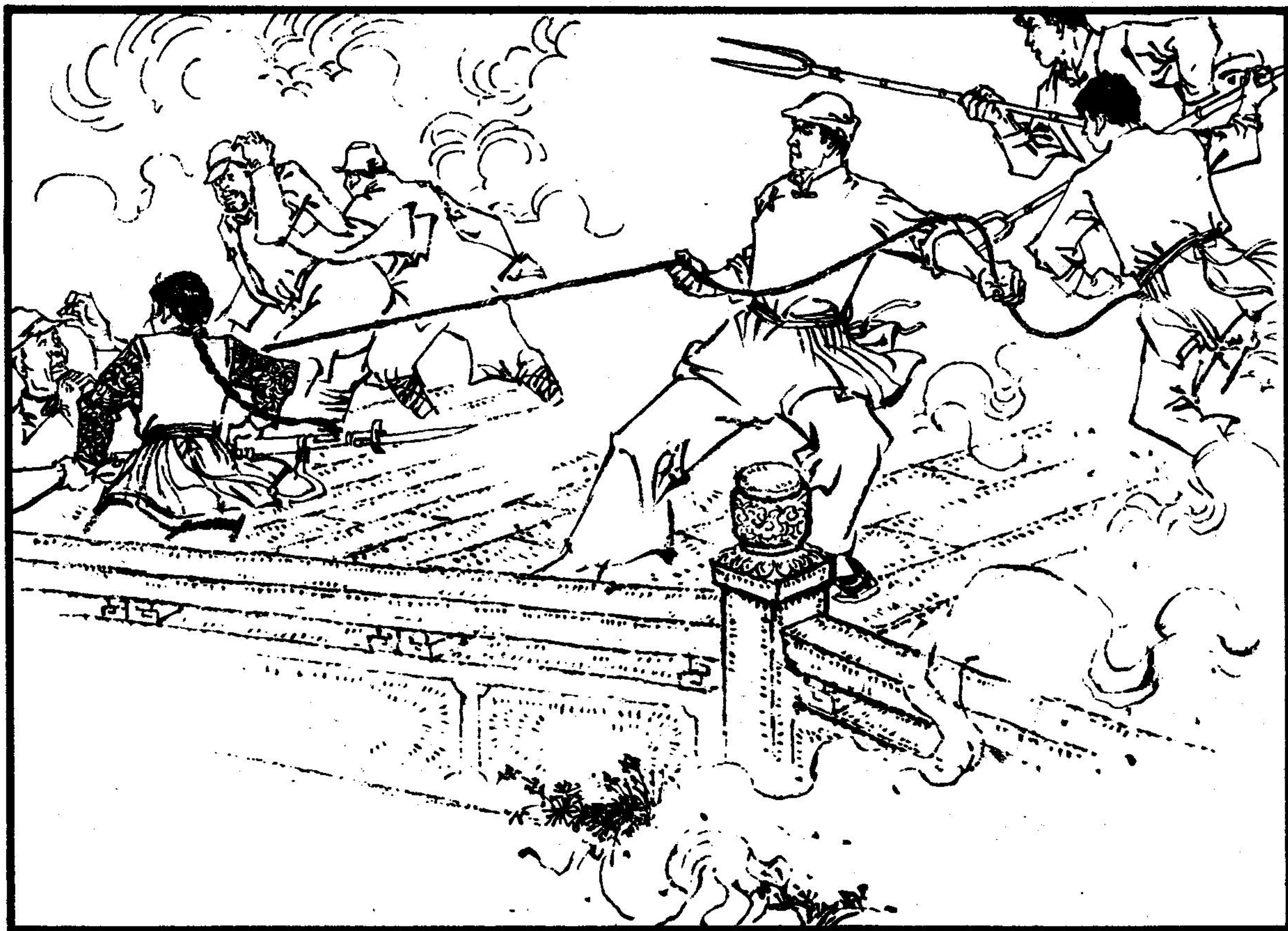
76. The "matron" blocked his way. Her eyes swept all around. Everyone was holding his breath and watching her closely.



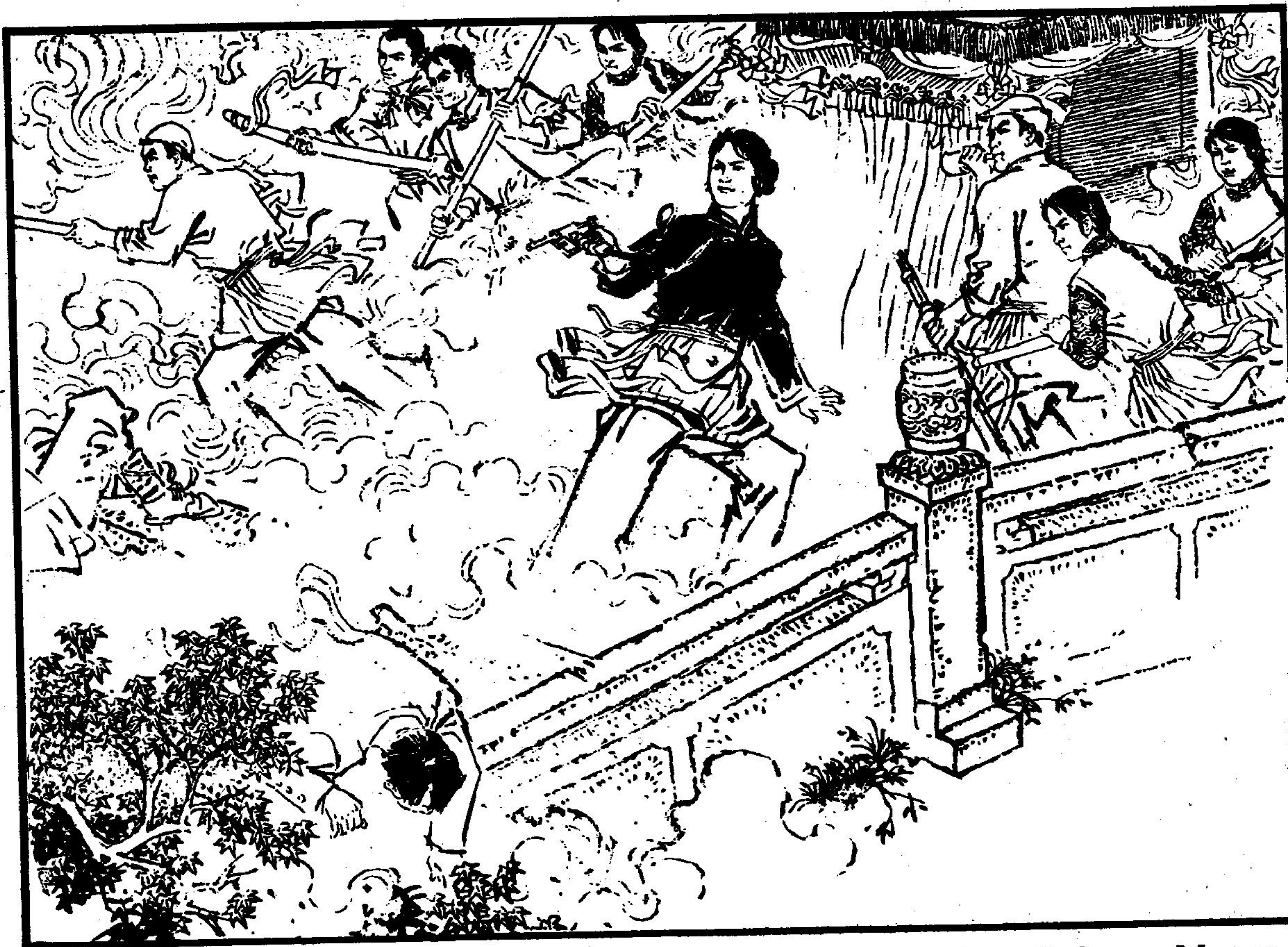
77. They saw her raise her hand, pull off her flowered headcloth and let "Barrel" worm his way into the sedan chair. Then she shouted: "Comrades, fight!"



78. Instantly, the scene became one of tumult. She threw the mahogany box at the interpreter's head. The blow made his head bleed heavily, and he fell to the ground.



79. The skinny Japanese soldier was scared stiff. The "head boatman" used his rope to lasso him around the neck, then tightened it and choked the Japanese to death.



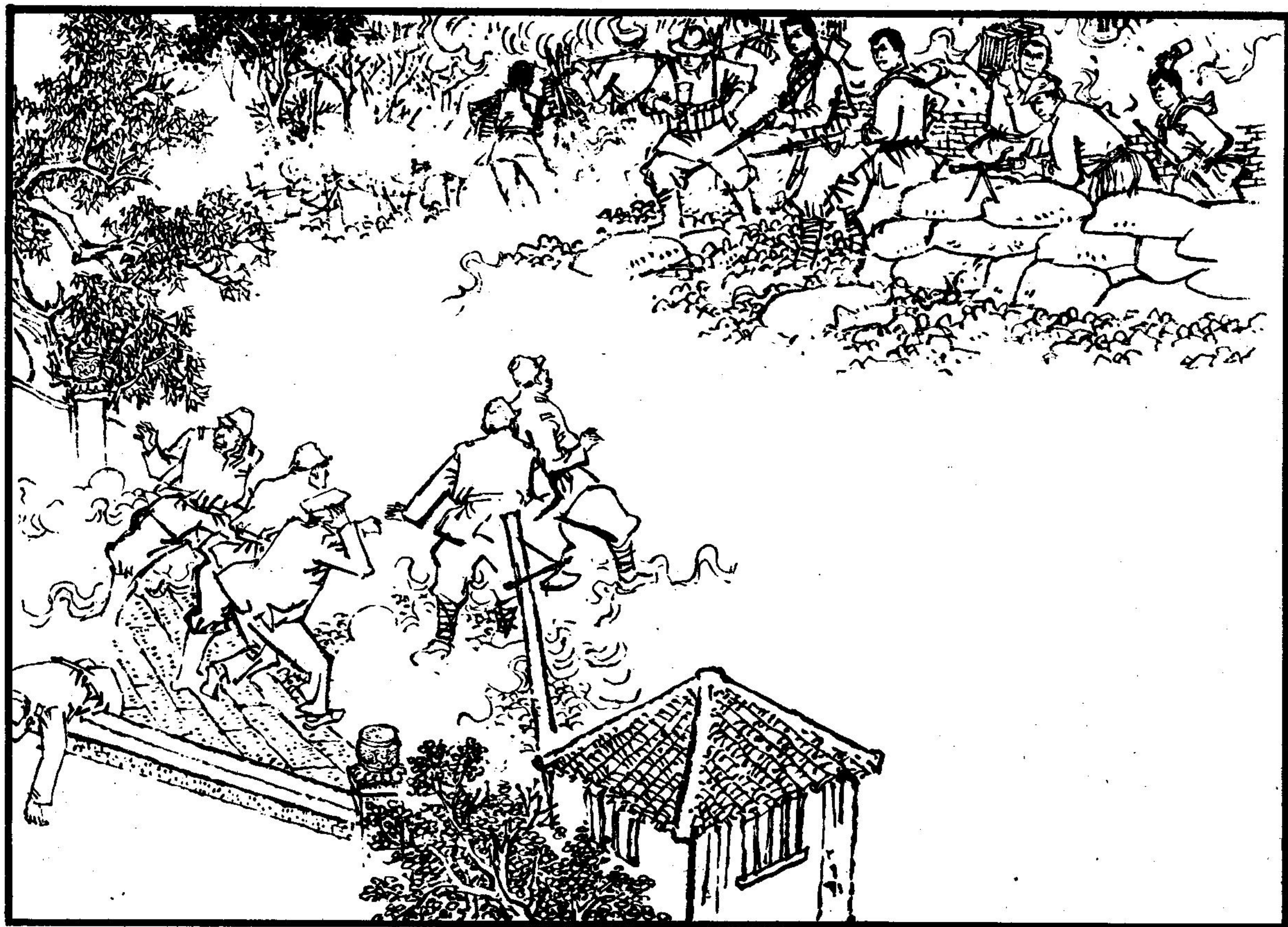
80. Sister Double Happiness' actions were precise and quick. She pulled out a Mauser, aimed at a sentry near the enemy stronghold and whipped off a shot. The sentry dropped to the ground.



81. Some other enemy sentries were just preparing to fire back when the "head boatman" heaved a grenade at them, blowing them to bits.



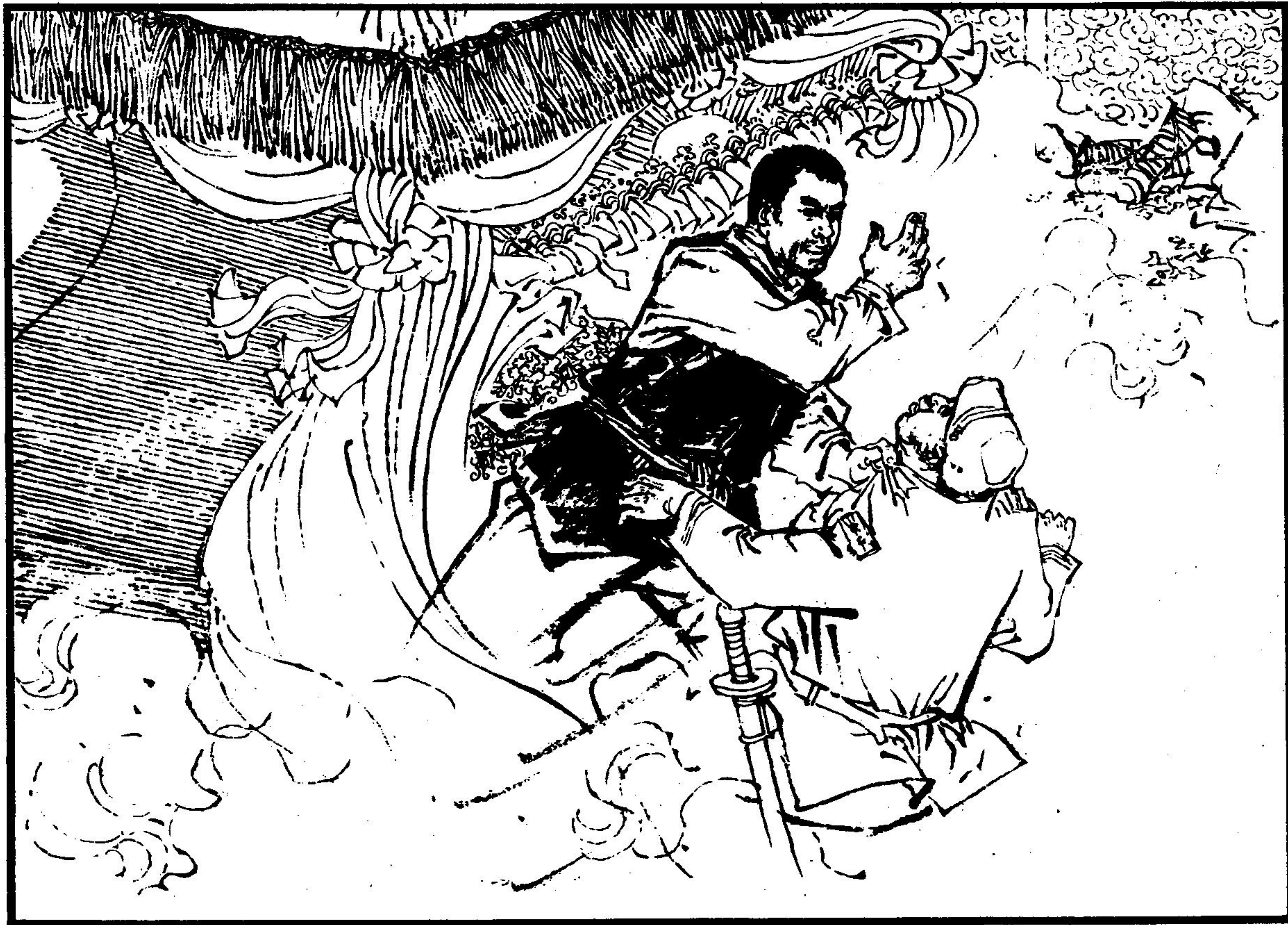
82. Then the chair-bearers, boatmen and all the others, rushed up with their fishing spears and shoulder poles. Calling out their battle-cry, they charged the enemy.



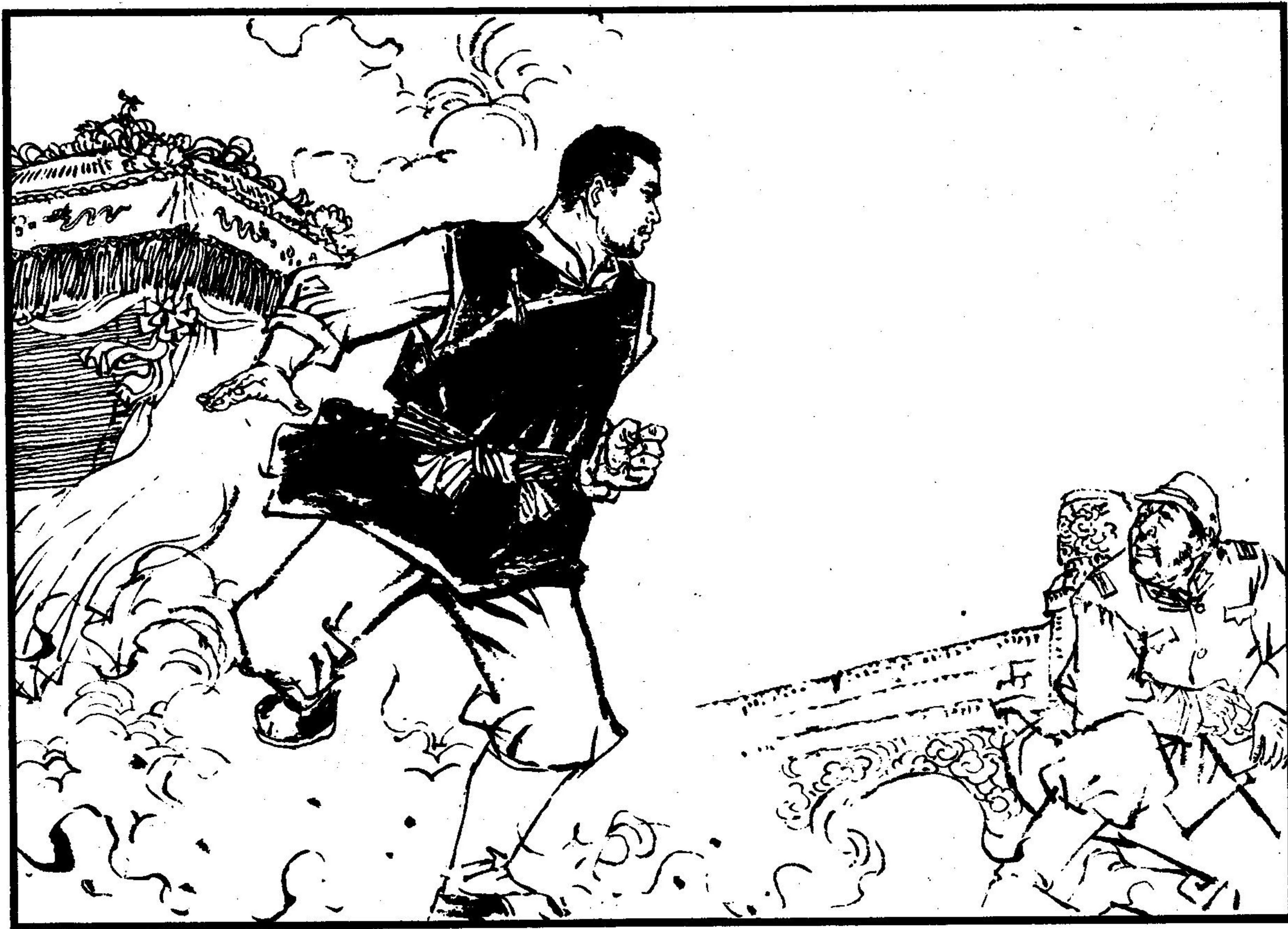
83. The enemy discovered that they had been fooled. They thought of retreating to the stronghold to get their guns, but the bridge was tightly sealed and the way to their lair was blocked.



84. The "onlookers" also joined in fighting the enemy.



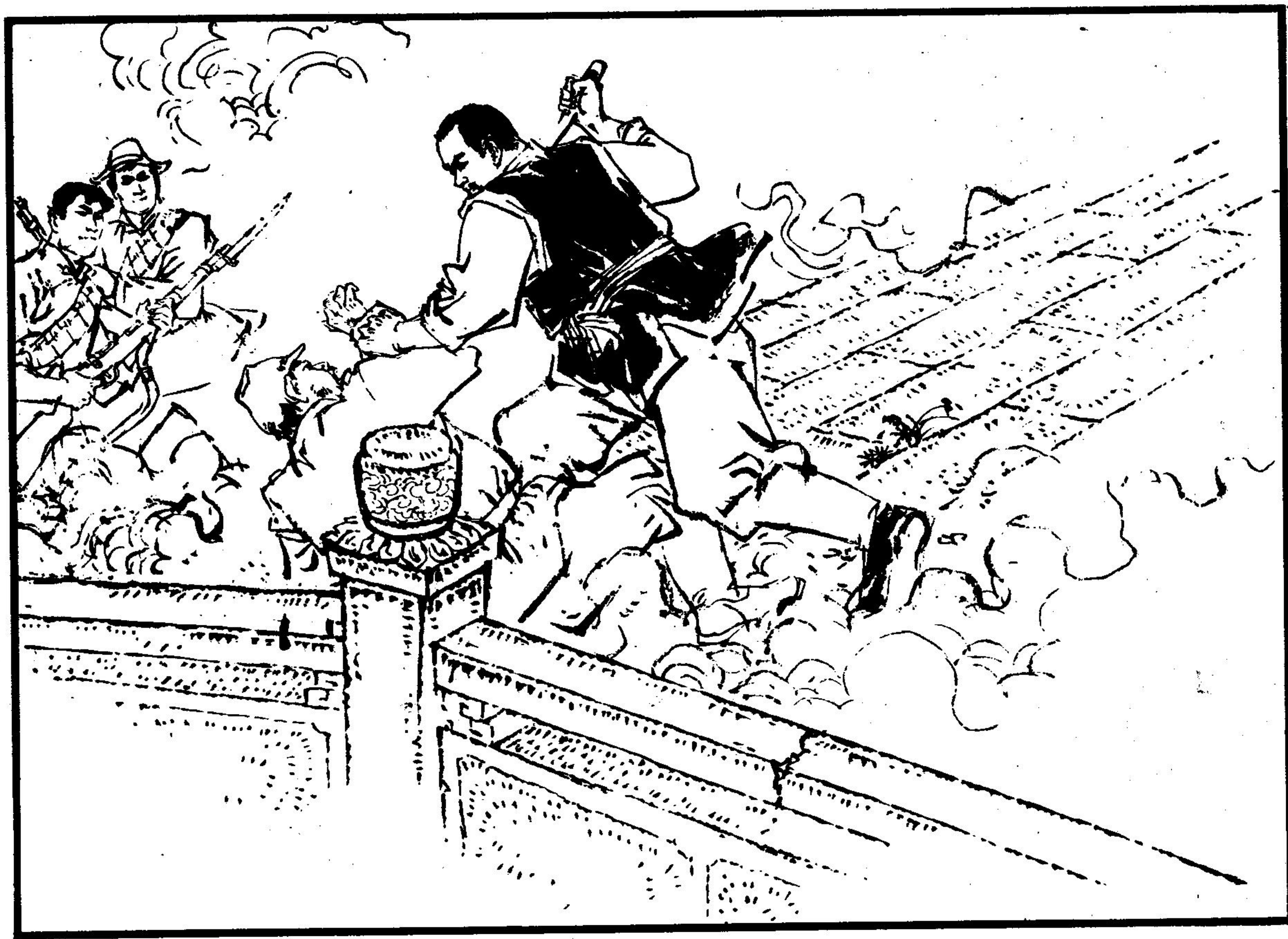
85. "Barrel," who was squeezing his way into the sedan chair, had just loosened the bride's headcloth. My God! What kind of a beauty this "bride" was! "She" turned out to be a hairy, dark-skinned man who began to cry out: "You swine, Black Bull's been waiting for you for so long." He then started to lay about the Japanese officer.



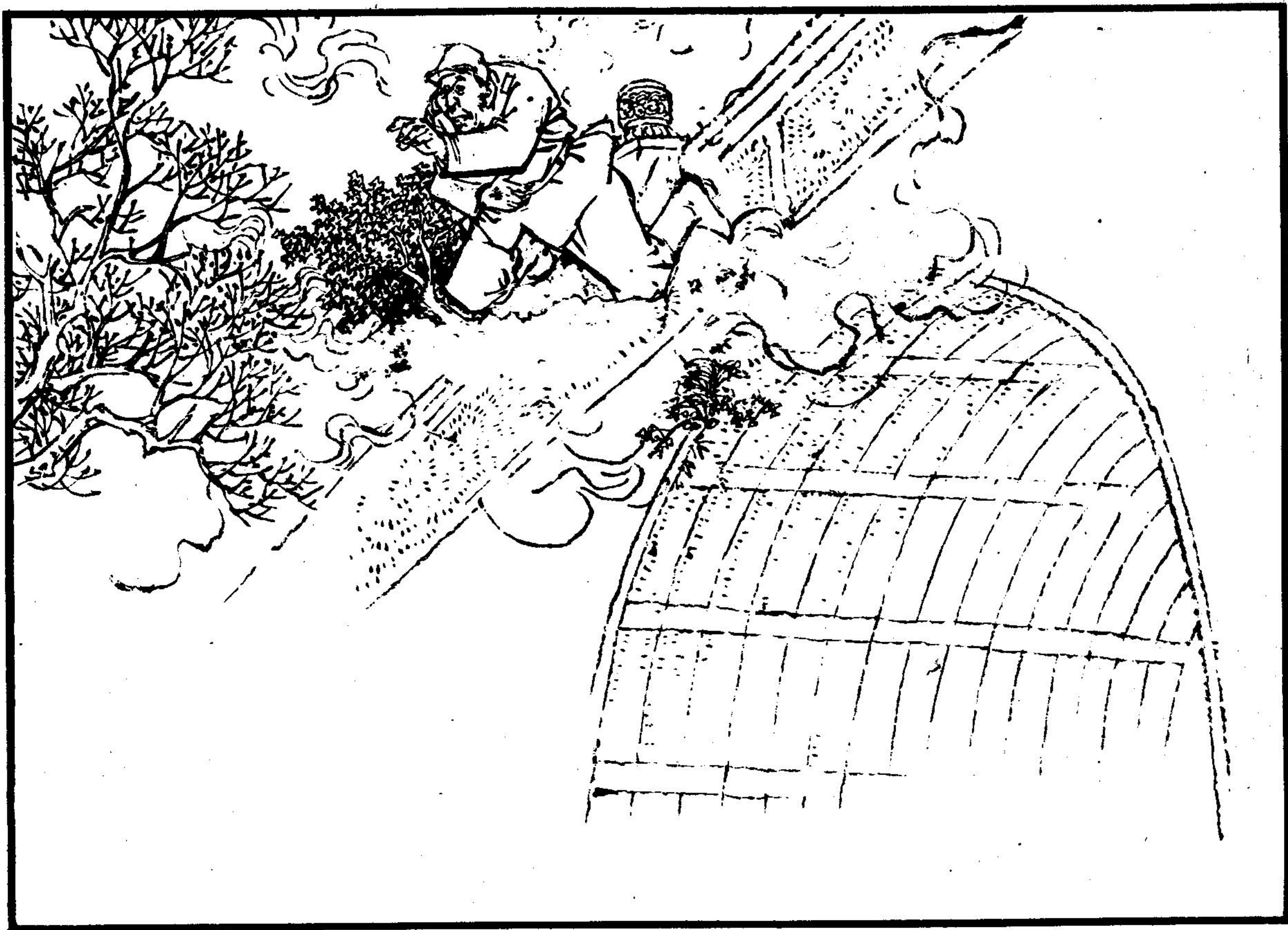
86. "Barrel" staggered under the blows and woke out of his drunken stupor. He quickly rolled to one side and pulled out his pistol.



87. Black Bull let loose with a kick, and "Barrel's" pistol went flying. Rushing up, Black Bull picked him up and threw him onto the bridge.



88. "Barrel's" head spun and his eyes saw black. Fighting madly for his life, he tried to get away. Black Bull pulled out a dagger and stabbed him.



89. "Barrel" cried out in pain and, bent double, fell into the river.



90. "Where are you going?" Black Bull shouted. Throwing out his arms, he jumped in after him.



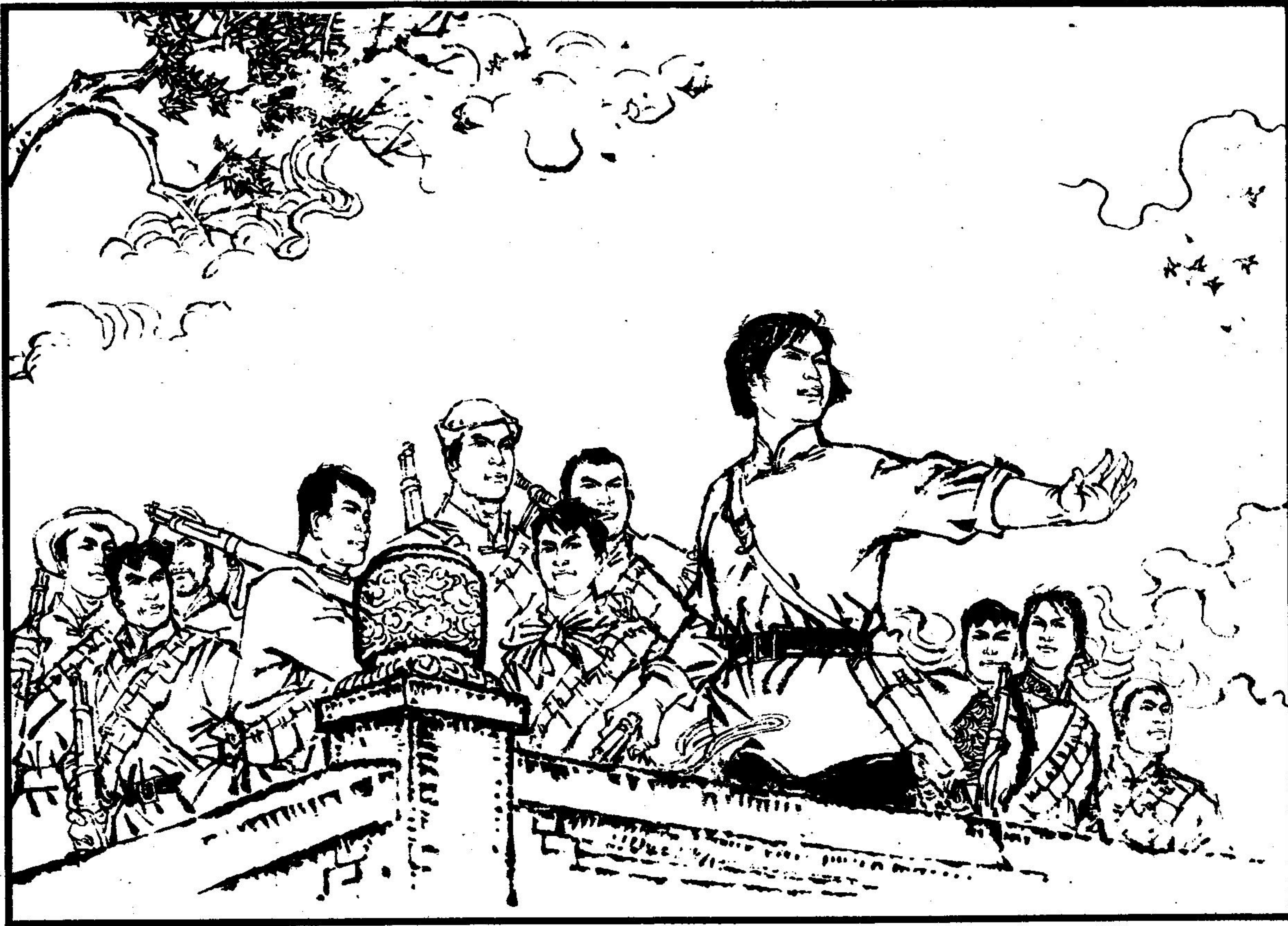
91. Black Bull was a good swimmer. He surged forward and grabbed "Barrel." Raising his dagger, he gave him a few savage thrusts. The river waters turned red.



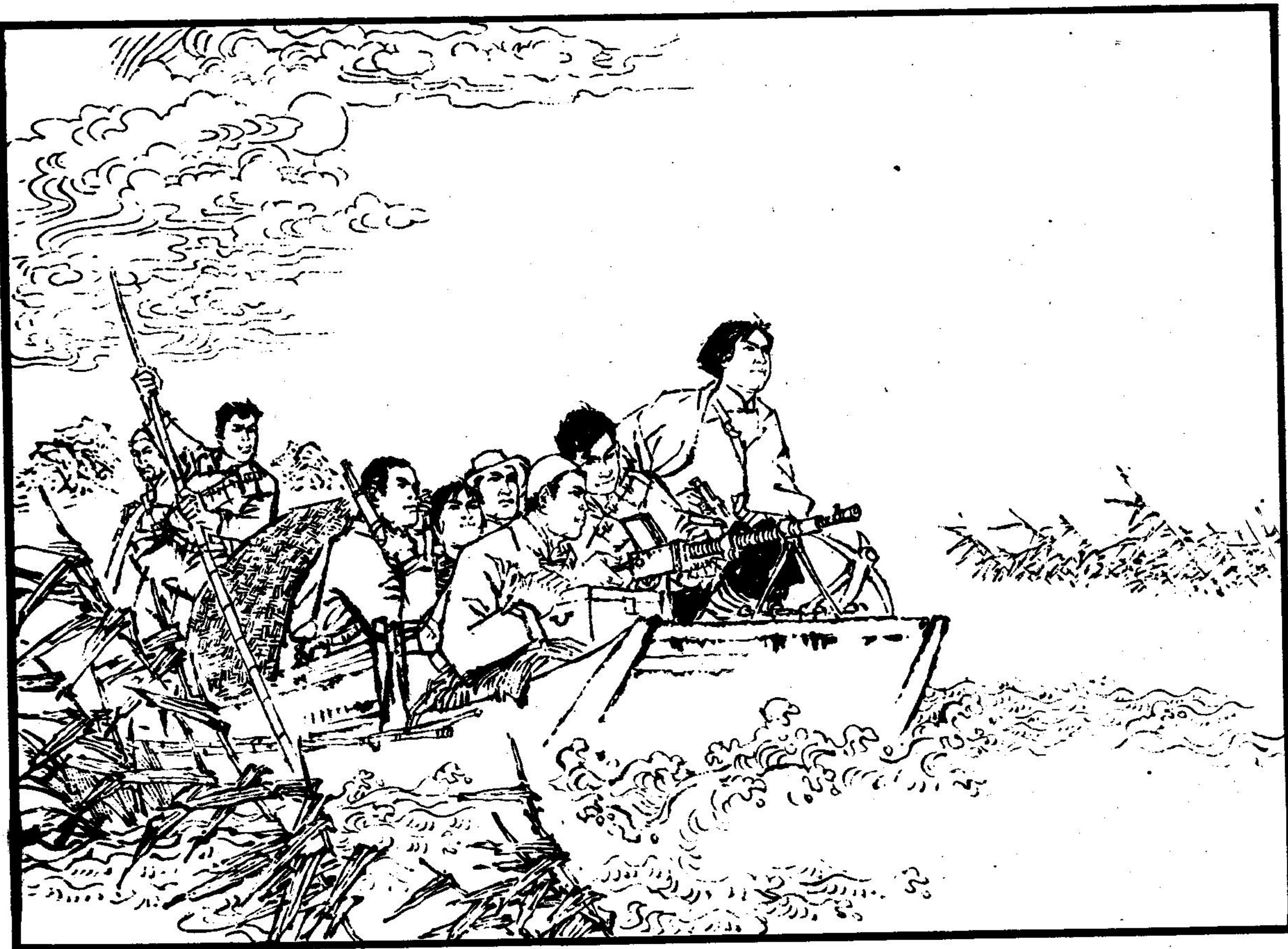
92. It was a quick and clean battle. Within half an hour, all the enemy at Dragon Pool Bridge had been wiped out. Ta-kang and the other comrades collected and placed the captured machine-guns, rifles and ammo-cases in the boat.



93. Black Bull was completely soaked but happy. He raised a captured pistol and said: "Killed a Japanese and got a gun. This is really double happiness."



94. Now, from the distance came the sound of heavy gunfire. Sister Double Happiness' spirits rose. "Our guerrillas are attacking the enemy stronghold in the town," she said. "The power of Chairman Mao's idea on people's war is tremendous. Let's keep on fighting for the revolution. Now, Ta-kang, take a squad and wait in ambush here.



95. The great earth was bathed in the moonlight. The night wind blew softly. Having wiped out the enemy's Dragon Pool Bridge stronghold, Sister Double Happiness and her comrades, militant and high-spirited, set out for new battle assignments.

